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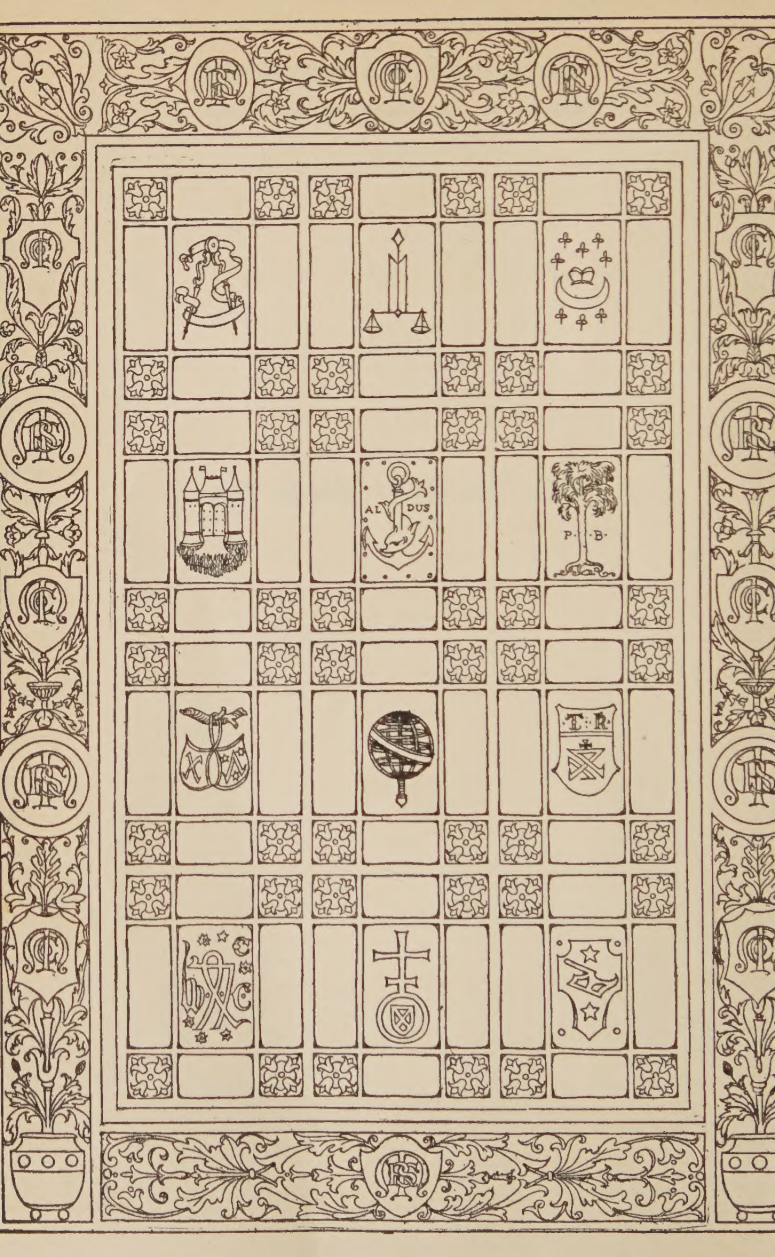
THE MODERN READERS' SERIES

ASHLEY H. THORNDIKE, *General Editor*

The Travels of Marco Polo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The Book of Ser Marco Polo

The Venetian

CONCERNING THE KINGDOMS AND MARVELS OF THE EAST

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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MONGOL States about 1280 A.D. & MARCO POLO'S travels.
REP. of NOVGOROD
(1241) Liegnitz
POLAND
LITHUANIA
HUNGARY
RUSSIA
Volga
Kazan
Kieff
Dnieper
Empire of KIPCHAK (Golden Horde)
URALS
SIBIR Empire
Obi
Yenisei
Irtish
Amur
MONGOLIA
Karakorum
KUBLAI KHAN (YUAN Dynasty)
Pekin
CATHAY
Hwang-ho
Yang-tse-kiang
MANZI
Constantinople
SELJUKS
Trebizond
ARMENIA
Tabriz
Nyasa
Oxus
Samarkand
Empire of ZAGATAI (Great Turkey)
Kashgar
PAMIRS
Tarim
Lob Nor
Khotan
TIBET
Empire of
(Hulagu 1253)
Bagdad
Jerusalem
ILKHAN PERSIA Empire
Balkh
PUNJAB
Indus
Delhi
Ormuz
ARABIA
Ganges
INDIA
BIRMA
MIEN
PEGU
Polo's homeward sea journey to Ormuz
J.F.H.
Marco Polo's route
homeward
0
500
1000
2000 Miles

INTRODUCTION

A CLASSIC, a book out of the past, is not easy to understand. Very often it is disappointing, as an ancient city which has been excavated might be disappointing. The city may seem at first a heap of fragments. The book may seem to be curiously put together. The Book of Marco Polo, for example, was put together without a map. A modern book of travel would be unthinkable without a map. Since this edition of Polo is meant to make the voice of the author intelligible across the space of six hundred years, a map has been added. So have other modern essentials, luxuries which the modern reader has gradually grown to require.

Especially is a classic difficult because it does not state its own importance. Darwin did not write on his title-page a certificate of his book's importance. Copernicus did not write a preface to prove that his discovery would revolutionize the thinking of the civilized world. Neither of them knew how important their names were to be. Nor did Polo when he wrote his "Book of the Kingdoms and Wonders of the East." In fact, he wrote it because he was vexed with the people who refused to believe in his story. He was far from imagining that he was virtually discovering Asia for the millions of western Europe. He could not have known that his Book was to be a classic.

To explain the classic is the aim of this introduction. I shall try to show how a medieval book differs from a book of today. I shall try to state Polo's achievement. And I shall try to measure the value of the Book of his achievement after six hundred years.

The Journey

The journey of Marco Polo to the East is one of the great journeys of history. Properly speaking, the real hero of it and of his Book is not Marco Polo at all, but his father and uncle. Nicolo and Maffeo Polo were Venetian merchants, in the time when the Italian cities commanded the trade of Europe, carrying their wares from Bagdad to London. One Polo brother lived for a time in the Venetian colony in Constantinople, exactly as an American importer today might spend some time in an office in Buenos Aires. He also owned a house in Soldaia, the main port of the Crimea, again for business reasons. Coming back to Venice as head of the house and business, this Polo, the elder Marco, was replaced abroad by his two younger brothers, Nicolo and Maffeo. When our story begins, in the year 1260 A.D., they sailed from Constantinople across the Black Sea to Soldaia.

It may be that business was not very good in this port of outlet for the goods of Russia. The Tartars from central Asia had overrun most of Russia within the last forty years, and had very likely upset the usual trade. It is not then surprising that Venetian importers would go inland to investigate, in the hope of buying their leather and their furs nearer the source. The Tartars seemed to be settling down. They were not unfriendly to traders. And there was nothing especially venturous in the journey which the Polos now made into the Tartar kingdom.

They visited its capital, Sarai on the Volga. Then they went up the river some seven hundred miles to the center of the leather trade. Their journey from Soldaia had covered about a thousand miles, to the latitude of Moscow, and they had probably endured the usual hardships of travel in any country, which in that medieval time only the robust could stand. Still they had done nothing very remarkable, except as all travel must be remarkable, in covering a route which must have been well known to them by report.

Then a war broke out behind them. At once their journey changed from a difficult but ordinary business trip to a strategic retreat. The Tartars who had conquered Persia quarreled with the Tartars who had conquered Russia, and for several years there was fighting back and forth across the Caucasus. Not caring to be caught and plundered on the way home, and not liking to try the unstable western frontier between the Tartars and the Poles, the Polos boldly resolved to cross from Russia into Asia. Going east instead of south or west, they followed the caravan route which brought them beyond the Caspian to the desert of Turkestan. In one of the oases, which housed the ancient city of Bokhara, they stopped and waited. Probably they found buying and selling to do there, and they stayed three years. So far as they knew, the wars were still going on behind them. They could not go back as they had come, through Russia. Nor could they try the other direction, through Persia. Both routes would mean danger from the irregular cavalry of the Tartars and their subjects.

Since they had no prospect of getting home, the Polos must then have reasoned that they might as well keep going. When a government mission passed through Bokhara, in the year 1265, on its way home from Persia to Peking, they were easily persuaded to attach themselves. They were already three thousand miles from home. Now they set out eastward with the mission over three thousand miles more, three thousand miles of mountain and desert and flooded plain. It took them a year and a half of travel, and of waiting for snows and floods to subside so that they might travel, before they arrived at the capital city of the new Tartar empire. At once they were received with especial favor by the alert and progressive conqueror Kubla Khan.

Henceforth their travels were virtually official. The Polos were to carry with them the Tablets of Gold of the Mongol emperor, which were reverenced throughout the

great new dominion of the Asiatic horsemen. They might travel from Peking to Bagdad in one direction, from Peking to Poland in the other. In this vast empire built by Jengis Khan and Kubla Khan, they were no longer merchants, but imperial envoys. And when they had crossed its frontiers, they were nobles of the naval empire of Venice. From man they had nothing to fear. Their contest was to be fought with primal nature, armed with all her weapons except the one weapon of Arctic ice.

No ordinary travelers then, the Polos were sent back by Kubla Khan on a mission to the Pope of Rome. Thenceforth their story is told more fully in the Book. Their Tablets of Gold brought them all the facilities of travel, relays of post animals, hospitality from worshipful tribes and khans, military escorts. In 1269 they arrived at Acre in Palestine after three long years across Asia. Two years they waited in Venice for a new Pope to be elected. After their furlough, they set out again over the long route to Peking, taking this time the young son of Nicolo, the fifteen-year-old Marco Polo. Again they were sped by Pope and King and Khan. They spent nearly four years on their seven thousand mile journey, and arrived at length in the Tartar summer capital in 1275.

The story is already a remarkable one, the story of perhaps the most remarkable journey in history. But it is only a prologue to an even more remarkable story, which was never written and cannot be written. For seventeen years the three Venetians remained in the court and the favor of the emperor of half the world. What they did there is only hinted in the Book. They accompanied the sovereign in his journeys. They went to war with his armies. They went on missions for him, for no barrier of race or religion seems to have counted in Kubla Khan's esteem. These facts we infer from an occasional chance remark.

Of the young Marco himself we learn that he was sent on an official mission to the southwestern interior of China

and on into Tibet and Burma, where he found natives more savage than any he had yet met. For three years he was governor of a great Chinese city. He was sent by sea to India, perhaps to bring back from Ceylon the mythical relics of the Buddha, exactly as his elders had brought back the Sacred Oil from Jerusalem to a ruler who might be called a connoisseur of religions.

Of all these exploits there is only the barest hint, where a volume would not suffice; for they are indeed remarkable. One has become used to the idea of Europeans going out to rule barbarous nations. It is possible that Portuguese and Spanish and French and British and Dutch adventurers, who have taken up the white man's burden, have done as striking things. But they had armed force behind them and a slow and gradual experience of empire. Even in their records I doubt if one can adduce a parallel to the record of a thirty-year-old European ruling a Chinese city by the favor of the emperor of Asia.

But this story one cannot dwell on, for it has never been told. Beside it, the last journey of the Polos might be anticlimax, but is not. For when seventeen years of the foreign court had made them impatient for home, which the two elders had left more than thirty years before, an occasion came. This was no less majestic than the escorting of a royal princess to her marriage in Persia. One would like her story too, her departure at seventeen from her familiar court and family to become queen of a great and distant province, her perilous marriage to a king without a throne, her early death in a remote land. But her story is not told. Instead we have the picture of the foreign friends of her emperor, convoying her westward by the sea route. From southern China to Persia they sailed in what were virtually the only ocean-going ships in the world. To Indo-China, the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, the imperial squadron sailed, meeting probably all the dangers of the sea, or enough at least to kill off most of the company. By way of Ceylon and the western

coast of India they sailed and into the Persian Gulf; and thence overland the diminished escort followed the familiar route to the Persian capital. Two years it had taken them; and another year was to pass before the Venetians finally made their thousand-mile way to the Black Sea and home through the Mediterranean.

The Writing of the Book

From 1260 to 1295 the journeys of the Polos had lasted; and the story made a stir in Venice. The family home which they bought was nicknamed Millions Court by reason of the tales, and perhaps the treasure, which the Polos had brought back with them. Whatever treasure they had was real and could be pointed to. In fact, there lived a legend in Venice of ripping jewels from the seams of travel-worn garments, in the presence of a large and excited company. Their tales of the East were not so real, and as is usual with travelers' tales were barely believed by a people whose geography came from the Bible and from coast-clinging sailors. Marco Polo may have tried to tell his story. He may even have tried to write it. But though he could use half a dozen languages, mostly barbarous in Europe, he probably made no claim to a literary command of any one. In any case, he was laughed at for his account of the wealth of the East, and was nicknamed Marco Millions.

So the story of the first Europeans to cross Asia seemed likely to be laughed out of existence. Then a war intervened. And as a war had started the journey, so a war gave birth to the Book of the journey.

In the year 1298, Marco Polo, being of the nobility, commanded a galley in a naval war between Venice and Genoa. Virtually the whole Venetian fleet was shattered in a battle in the Adriatic. Seven thousand prisoners were carried to Genoa. And Marco Polo, who had gone and come unscathed over the face of Asia, found himself in a Genoese jail.

He spent a year in prison, probably in the Palazzo San Giorgio. Here if anywhere was occasion to tell and retell the experiences of more than half his lifetime. As it happened, a professional writer was at Polo's elbow. Rustician of Pisa was an honest if not very talented scribbler. He had condensed and retold in prose some of the great romances of Arthur which had swept into fashion in the courts of Europe in the preceding century. He was a sort of popular novelist. But he had unluckily gone to war for Pisa, and he had been a prisoner of war in Genoa for ten years when Polo arrived in the same jail. Again he took to his inkpot, and wrote from dictation the Venetian's full account of the wonders of the East.

Rustician was not merely a penman, though he modestly claimed to be no more. He had to plan the book, to find some decent arrangement for Polo's pell-mell series of anecdotes out of the twenty-six years abroad. There must have been difficulty at the start in choosing even a language to write in. There was no Italian language yet, for Dante's "Divine Comedy," which made one, was not yet begun. Latin would be the normal choice, but it was already recognized in the Latin countries that the popular tongue, the language of every day, was the language for literature, as distinct from learning. Dante was on the point of writing his great book in Tuscan, or central Italian. Rustician and Polo were both northerners, but they had some difficulty in understanding each other, as a man speaking the peculiar dialect of New York City might not be easily understood by a man from New Orleans. There was one language they could agree on. Rustician had used French in his romances, since French was already, as it still is, the polite language of Europe. So Rustician wrote in French; and one can picture the Babel of tongues in the dictation, as Polo turned his thoughts from Venetian at the easiest, from Persian or Tartar at the hardest, into a commercial French or "lingua franca," which Rustician would then have to polish into court French.

The writing of a book in French by two Italians was no light enterprise, and a prison was not the best place to do it in. From the opening flourish to the closing, where the novelist praised his hero as he had praised his knights of romance, the Book must have taken much time and trouble. There was only a year for it, since Pisa and Venice both submitted to Genoa, and the prisoners were released.

The task done, Polo carried his manuscript with him, and with much pride. For some ten years later he gave a copy, revised and corrected, to a passing French ambassador. What more he did with it we do not know. Back in Venice, he married, had three daughters born to him, and died in 1324, at the age of seventy. He remained something of a merchant, it seems, like most Venetians. He may have traveled again, though he seems to have practically retired. But to the end of his life he was known, even in the state records, as Marco Polo of the Millions, the man with a legendary past.

The Book he had dictated did not die with him. With or without Polo's aid, copies were made and scattered. Translations were done into Italian, and then into the universal language, Latin; and both copyists and translators made havoc with the text. By the time books began to be printed instead of copied, a century and a half later, the manuscripts had spread over Europe. The first edition was printed in 1477 in Germany, the home of the press, in German. Latin and French followed. And since the age of printing was also the age of the great discoveries, the Book of the Venetian was translated also in Spanish and Portuguese and finally English, the languages of new discoverers of whom Polo would never have dreamed.

But the Book was not even yet complete, though its author had been dead two centuries. As the age of discovery mobilized all the geographical knowledge possible, it originated the great collections of travel. The first of these collections was put together in the fifteen-fifties

by Ramusio, a Venetian official and scholar. Naturally he included the Book of his countryman, which was no longer looked on as fabulous, in his three volumes of "Voyages and Travels." And what is more, he enlarged it considerably.

Ramusio's edition is the last stage of the Book. His additions are always important and interesting. Many of them must have come straight from Polo, since not even Ramusio's wide reading can account for the frequent unexpected facts. They are therefore often included, within brackets, in this edition of the Book.

The brackets are in fact hardly needed. Whenever the narrative becomes suddenly vivid or exciting, whenever a sharp detail or an emotional moment explodes the evenness of the story, then one can be nearly certain that Ramusio has lighted another fuse. He was a trained writer of some talent. One has only to read his interview with Sebastian Cabot, the discoverer of North America, to discover that he could tell a story. He was the man, were all things ordered for the best, who should have taken down Polo's narrative instead of the honest Rustician.

The Book

For the "Book of the Kingdoms and Wonders of the East" seems at first to be dull writing. Very few of the things one wants to know about a journey are told, even when one considers that there was so much to be told. What does get in seems moreover to be made about as exciting as a page of stock-exchange quotations. But just as the market reports are significant and even, down to the last fraction, highly exciting to one who knows what they mean and what violent human activity they may stand for, so Rustician's bare outline flames with excitement when one looks behind the simple phrase.

"When you depart from this City, you find yourself in a Desert of surpassing aridity, which lasts for some eight

days. Here are neither fruits nor trees to be seen, and what water there is is bitter and bad, so that you have to carry both food and water." So Polo describes the great salt desert of central Persia. In just the same tone might a romance of chivalry say vaguely, "They fought from noon to sunset, and were too weary to leave the field." In each case the reader must be alert to catch every meaning. He must see the thick salt floor of a vanished sea, and on its background a desperate camel caravan, struggling against sand and storm and thirst and terrific heat.

Again Polo has this to say of the Pamirs, the roof of Asia: "And when you ride three days northeast, always among mountains, you get to such a height that 'tis said to be the highest place in the world. . . . The region is so lofty and cold that you do not even see any birds flying. . . . Now if we go with our journey towards east-north-east, we travel a good forty days, continually passing over mountains and hills, or through valleys, and crossing many rivers and tracts of wilderness. And in all this way you find neither habitation of man nor any green thing." The picture is sketched. We are not even told how Polo crossed the tremendous mountains, much less what hardships and anxieties and privations attended the six weeks of travel.

This tone of compression and restraint means that the Book must be read as poetry, not as prose. "And in all this way you find neither habitation of man nor any green thing": the language, in the great modern translation of Sir Henry Yule, is the mighty language of the King James Bible. The power of the words opens up a vista of lofty desolation. The line is of sheer poetry.

The Book is poetry then, not story. The journeys which would make a mighty story are merely sketched. One hardly knows how the Polos traveled. One learns little of their encounters and negotiations with khans and kings, with merchants, caravans and caravanserais, native servants and guides. Hardships and dangers are

barely hinted. A curt phrase will speak of the heat of the Persian Gulf, of the drought of the central deserts, of the cold of the high altitudes. A brief mention is made of Marco's illness, perhaps malaria, which lasted a year before it was cured by mountain air. A sentence explains that the party was set upon by bandits in Persia and barely escaped death. But the chance hints do not make a story. They suggest, as poetry suggests. It is the reader who must make the story from the poetic word.

One reason why Polo did not write the great story fitting the great journeys is that he may not have thought that there was very much to write about. What makes travel interesting is variety of experience; and in a simpler age there was much less variety. Every traveler went by ship or by animal. There was no other way. The animal he rode was usually a horse; and if he changed to a camel in the deserts, or to a yak in the mountains, the difference hardly mattered. Today a traveler who rides on a railroad at a thousand miles a day finds it adventurous to change to a horse at fifty miles a day. A horse or a camel was not exciting to Polo.

Nor were differences in people exciting. A Persian or a Chinese city would be no more or less sanitary than a European one. Food would be simple and monotonous and more or less dangerous everywhere. Even language would not cause a striking difference. If Polo had to use a foreign language, Persian or Tartar, to speak to an Asiatic, he had to use a foreign language to speak to a Pisan, who lived around the corner. The art of the travelogue was altogether simpler when there were so much slighter differences to explain.

The other reason for the lack of story in the Book is that there simply wasn't room. Polo was describing most of Asia. There were better, because fuller, travel stories written in his own time. Two friars had recently gone on separate missions to the Mongol court in Mongolia, before it had been moved to Peking. Their stories were fully

told. It is to them that one turns for an account of the hardships and indignities endured by the unskilled traveler. From the narratives of William of Ruysbroek and John of Plano Carpini one can find out much more of the realities of travel than one can from Polo. Their single journeys had left them space for story.

Their single journeys had left them also with a full sense of the unknown and the dangerous. They were still amateurs. Polo had become the professional traveler. Danger hardly existed for the imperial envoy. Hardship had come to be taken for granted, as it is taken for granted by soldiers, who cannot tell their story to civilians because they do not know where to begin. What was unknown and important to the inexperienced friars had become familiar and even forgotten to Polo in his twenty-six years of experience. Such at least was the impression he gave in dictating his sober narrative, which was not meant to describe marvels but to clear the name of Marco Millions. And especially he had no time to linger. He had not a single journey to record nor a single country. He had to remember half a lifetime of journeys and rather more than half the known world.

Condensing was Polo's main problem then. Condensing is also the prime need of poetry, in which every word must tell. The Book, being made by condensing, must be read as a series of flashes, a brief or long lighting up, by poetry and the important word, of kingdom after kingdom, of wonder after wonder, of the unknown East. Taken as poetry, it does not matter whether Polo was the first or the thousandth to illuminate the deserts and mountains of central Asia and the fertile populations of China. He saw, and noted, and made poetry. Taken as poetry, it does not matter whether what he wrote was even true. For several centuries the Book was not taken as true. It was the imagination of Marco Millions.

That imagination has added to the great poetry of the world. The poetic reader will be kindled by brief flashes

such as I have quoted. He will dwell especially, with Polo, on the magnificence of the Mongol court, on its festivals and ceremonies and sumptuous progresses to the "stately pleasure-dome" in Xanadu or to the imperial hunting-grounds. He will be led to wonder again at the ancient and mighty civilization of China, a civilization to which Tartar and Venetian were alike upstarts. Most of all, perhaps, he will be aware of the immense panorama of man, the varied and versatile and universal inhabitant of wilderness and city and fertile plain. Man is the chief wonder of the "Book of the Wonders of the East."

The Book as Knowledge

This is the greatness of Polo's story, that it speaks throughout its poetry of the wonder of the tenacity of man. But the Book has another claim to greatness. Not only is it poetry. It is also science. Step by step its wonders have been proved to be fact. What was once regarded as a fabrication of marvels has been seen to be the fundamental First Book on the East.

The history of travel between Europe and Asia has been ably told by Sir Henry Yule, Polo's translator, in "Cathay and the Way Thither." From that history it becomes clear that the Polos were the first Europeans known to have crossed Asia. Alexander had reached India in war. Attila and the Huns, Batu and the Mongols, had invaded Europe. The Arabs were buying and selling in China soon after the time of Mohammed. The Nestorian Christian Church had sent its missionaries throughout Asia, reaching China at about the same time. In Polo's century the Roman Church had sent envoys to Mongolia; and even as the Polos returned from the East, they crossed on the way the missionary who was to establish the Roman Church in China. Two centuries after Polo, the new sea power of Portugal was to pave the permanent sea road to the East which has never been closed.

In all these ventures, there is only one which begins to

match the travel of the Polos. In their century two Tartars from Peking, being Nestorian Christian priests, set out for Jerusalem. They did not reach it; but one became head of the Nestorian Church at Bagdad, and the other traveled on beyond Bagdad as an envoy to Rome and even to Paris. This is perhaps the most unexpected story of early travel, and in going from Peking to Paris the priest from China traveled farther across the earth's surface than the Polos. But his single journey does not compare with theirs. They crossed Asia not once but three times, and they finally skirted the continent by sea. No one has traveled both routes until modern times. And there is no journey which compared with theirs until Magellan sailed round the world.

Moreover, the journey of the Tartar priest was never written down. One will never know what his Eastern eyes saw in the Persian and the Greek and the Roman civilizations. What Polo saw we know. And we know that he saw accurately, and remembered marvelously, and set down correctly. There is of course much that is inaccurate. There is much hearsay in the Book. His Tartar history is inaccurate. His accounts of places he had never visited are often wildly legendary. Out of his own observation, however, he remembered correctly, and his account of Asia still stands. Modern geographers make it a point of honor to verify Polo's findings, as biologists go back to Darwin and philosophers to Plato.

In fact, the Book is the first book ever written on Asia. There is only one previous book which can be at all compared with it. This was the "Cosmography" which Ptolemy wrote at the University of Alexandria in the second century A.D. In this book was summed up all that the Greeks had learned about the world. No one learned any more, or if he did, no one wrote down what he learned before Polo. But Ptolemy was not a traveler. His Asia was made up from the accounts of travelers. Polo was himself a traveler, the first in Europe, and the first to write

a book on Asia from his travels. He left the Middle Ages behind him when he wrote. He was the first modern explorer.

Polo was not a professional geographer, but his geography has been valuable for six centuries. Likewise he was not a professional writer, was not a writer at all: but his Book is one of the world's great books.

George B. Parks.

The Travels of Marco Polo

The text of this edition is based on the standard English version by Sir Henry Yule. Some of its minor inconsistencies have been corrected, but the principal change is in the spelling of proper names. This varies widely in the different manuscripts and has been still further confused in modern editions. Yule's editions failed to bring consistency out of this confusion. In the present edition these names have been given modern and uniform forms.

In this text as in Yule's, additions from Ramusio are enclosed in brackets. The unbracketed portion is the nearest we can come to Marco Polo's original dictation. The bracketed portions represent additional information which must have had its source in Marco Polo and which descended through unknown channels to Ramusio.

In Book IV where Yule's text condenses the original version, the text of this edition substitutes the omitted passages from the Marsden translation.

THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO

PROLOGUE

GREAT Princes, Emperors and Kings, Dukes and Marquises, Counts, Knights, and Burgesses! and People of all degrees who desire to get knowledge of the various races of mankind and of the diversities of the sundry regions of the World, take this Book and cause it to be read to you. For ye shall find therein all kinds of wonderful things, and the divers histories of the Great Armenia, and of Persia, and of the Land of the Tartars, and of India, and of many another country of which our Book doth speak, particularly and in regular succession, according to the description of Messer Marco Polo, a wise and noble citizen of Venice, as he saw them with his own eyes. Some things indeed there be therein which he beheld not; but these he heard from men of credit and veracity. And we shall set down things seen as seen, and things heard as heard only, so that no jot of falsehood may mar the truth of our Book, and that all who shall read it or hear it read may put full faith in the truth of all its contents.

For let me tell you that since our Lord God did mould with His hands our first Father Adam, even until this day, never hath there been Christian, or Pagan, or Tartar, or Indian, or any man of any nation, who in his own person hath had so much knowledge and experience of the divers parts of the World and its Wonders as hath had this Messer Marco! And for that reason he bethought himself that it would be a very great pity did he not cause to be put in writing all the great marvels that he had seen,

or on sure information heard of, so that other people who had not these advantages might, by his Book, get such knowledge. And I may tell you that in acquiring this knowledge he spent in those various parts of the World good six-and-twenty years. Now, being thereafter an inmate of the Prison at Genoa, he caused Messer Rusticiano of Pisa, who was in the said Prison likewise, to reduce the whole to writing; and this befell in the year 1298 from the birth of Jesus.

CHAPTER I

How the Two Brothers Polo set forth from Constantinople to traverse the world

It came to pass in the year of Christ 1260, when Baldwin was reigning at Constantinople, that Messer Nicolas Polo, the father of my lord Mark, and Messer Maffeo Polo, the brother of Messer Nicolas, were at the said city of Constantinople, whither they had gone from Venice with their merchants' wares. Now these two Brethren, men singularly noble, wise, and provident, took counsel together to cross the Greater Sea on a venture of trade; so they laid in a store of jewels and set forth from Constantinople, crossing the Sea to Soldaia.

CHAPTER II

How the Two Brothers went on beyond Soldaia

Having stayed a while at Soldaia, they considered the matter, and thought it well to extend their journey further. So they set forth from Soldaia and travelled till they came to the Court of a certain Tartar Prince, Barka Khan by name, whose residences were at Sarai and at Bolgara [and who was esteemed one of the most liberal and courteous Princes that ever was among the Tartars]. This Barka was delighted at the arrival of the Two Brothers, and treated them with great honour; so they presented to him the whole of the jewels that they had brought with them. The Prince was highly pleased with these, and accepted the offering most graciously, causing the Brothers to receive at least twice its value.

After they had spent a twelvemonth at the court of this Prince there broke out a great war between Barka

and Hulagu, the Lord of the Tartars of the Levant, and great hosts were mustered on either side.

But in the end Barka, the Lord of the Tartars of the Ponent, was defeated, though on both sides there was great slaughter. And by reason of this war no one could travel without peril of being taken; thus it was at least on the road by which the Brothers had come, though there was no obstacle to their travelling forward. So the Brothers, finding they could not retrace their steps, determined to go forward. Quitting Bolgara, therefore, they proceeded to a city called UKEK, which was at the extremity of the kingdom of the Lord of the Ponent; and thence departing again, and passing the great River Tigris, they travelled across a Desert which extended for seventeen days' journey, and wherein they found neither town nor village, falling in only with the tents of Tartars occupied with their cattle at pasture.

CHAPTER III

How the Two Brothers, after crossing a desert, came to the City of Bokhara, and fell in with certain Envoys there

AFTER they had passed the desert, they arrived at a very great and noble city called BOKHARA, the territory of which belonged to a king whose name was Borrak, and is also called Bokhara. The city is the best in all Persia. And when they had got thither, they found they could neither proceed further forward nor yet turn back again; wherefore they abode in that city of Bokhara for three years. And whilst they were sojourning in that city, there came from Hulagu, Lord of the Levant, Envoys on their way to the Court of the Great Khan, the Lord of all the Tartars in the world. And when the Envoys beheld the Two Brothers they were amazed, for they had never before seen Latins in that part of the world. And they

said to the Brothers: "Gentlemen, if ye will take our counsel, ye will find great honour and profit shall come thereof." So they replied that they would be right glad to learn how. "In truth," said the Envoys, "the Great Khan hath never seen any Latins, and he hath a great desire so to do. Wherefore, if ye will keep us company to his Court, ye may depend upon it that he will be right glad to see you, and will treat you with great honour and liberality; whilst in our company ye shall travel with perfect security, and need fear to be molested by nobody."

CHAPTER IV

How the Two Brothers took the Envoys' counsel, and went to the Court of the Great Khan

So when the Two Brothers had made their arrangements, they set out on their travels, in company with the Envoys, and journeyed for a whole year, going northward and north-eastward, before they reached the Court of that Prince. And on their journey they saw many marvels of divers and sundry kinds, but of these we shall say nothing at present, because Messer Mark, who has likewise seen them all, will give you a full account of them in the Book which follows.

CHAPTER V

How the Two Brothers arrived at the Court of the Great Khan

When the Two Brothers got to the Great Khan, he received them with great honour and hospitality, and showed much pleasure at their visit, asking them a great number of questions. First, he asked about the emperors, how they maintained their dignity, and administered justice in their dominions; and how they went forth to

battle, and so forth. And then he asked the like questions about the kings and princes and other potentates.

CHAPTER VI

How the Great Khan asked all about the manners of the Christians, and particularly about the Pope of Rome

And then he inquired about the Pope and the Church, and about all that is done at Rome, and all the customs of the Latins. And the Two Brothers told him the truth in all its particulars, with order and good sense, like sensible men as they were; and this they were able to do as they knew the Tartar language well.

CHAPTER VII

How the Great Khan sent the Two Brothers as his Envoys to the Pope

When that Prince, whose name was Kublai Khan, Lord of the Tartars all over the earth, and of all the kingdoms and provinces and territories of that vast quarter of the world, had heard all that the Brothers had to tell him about the ways of the Latins, he was greatly pleased, and he took it into his head that he would send them on an Embassy to the Pope. So he urgently desired them to undertake this mission along with one of his Barons; and they replied that they would gladly execute all his commands as those of their Sovereign Lord. Then the Prince sent to summon to his presence one of his Barons whose name was Cogatal, and desired him to get ready, for it was proposed to send him to the Pope along with the Two Brothers. The Baron replied that he would execute the Lord's commands to the best of his ability.

After this the Prince caused letters from himself to the Pope to be indited in the Tartar tongue, and committed them to the Two Brothers and to that Baron of his own, and charged them with what he wished them to say to the Pope. Now the contents of the letter were to this purport: He begged that the Pope would send as many as an hundred persons of our Christian faith; intelligent men, acquainted with the Seven Arts, well qualified to enter into controversy, and able clearly to prove by force of argument to idolaters and other kinds of folk, that the Law of Christ was best, and that all other religions were false and naught; and that if they would prove this, he and all under him would become Christians and the Church's liegemen. Finally he charged his Envoys to bring back to him some Oil of the Lamp which burns on the Sepulchre of our Lord at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VIII

How the Great Khan gave them a Tablet of Gold, bearing his orders in their behalf

When the Prince had charged them with all his commission, he caused to be given them a Tablet of Gold, on which was inscribed that the three Ambassadors should be supplied with everything needful in all the countries through which they should pass—with horses, with escorts, and, in short, with whatever they should require. And when they had made all needful preparations, the three Ambassadors took their leave of the Emperor and set out.

When they had travelled I know not how many days, the Tartar Baron fell sick, so that he could not ride, and being very ill, and unable to proceed further, he halted at a certain city. So the Two Brothers judged it best that they should leave him behind and proceed to carry out their commission; and, as he was well content that they

should do so, they continued their journey. And I can assure you, that whithersoever they went they were honourably provided with whatever they stood in need of, or chose to command. And this was owing to that Tablet of Authority from the Lord which they carried with them.

So they travelled on and on until they arrived at Ayas in Armenia, a journey which occupied them, I assure you, for three years. It took them so long because they could not always proceed, being stopped sometimes by snow, or by heavy rains falling, or by great torrents which they found in an impassable state.

CHAPTER IX

How the Two Brothers came to the city of Acre

They departed from Ayas and came to Acre, arriving there in the month of April, in the year of Christ 1269, and then they learned that the Pope was dead. And when they found that the Pope was dead (his name was Pope Clement IV), they went to a certain wise Churchman who was Legate for the whole kingdom of Egypt, and a man of great authority, by name Theobald of Piacenza, and told him of the mission on which they were come. When the Legate heard their story, he was greatly surprised, and deemed the thing to be of great honour and advantage for the whole of Christendom. So his answer to the two Ambassador Brothers was this: "Gentlemen, ye see that the Pope is dead; wherefore ye must needs have patience until a new Pope be made, and then shall ye be able to execute your charge." Seeing well enough that what the Legate said was just, they observed: "But while the Pope is a-making, we may as well go to Venice and visit our households." So they departed from Acre and went to Negropont, and from Negropont they continued their

voyage to Venice. On their arrival there, Messer Nicolas found that his wife was dead, and that she had left behind her a son of fifteen years of age, whose name was MARCO; and 'tis of him that this Book tells. The Two Brothers abode at Venice a couple of years, tarrying until a Pope should be made.

CHAPTER X

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS AGAIN DEPARTED FROM VENICE, ON THEIR WAY BACK TO THE GREAT KHAN, AND TOOK WITH THEM MARK, THE SON OF MESSER NICOLAS

WHEN the Two Brothers had tarried as long as I have told you, and saw that never a Pope was made, they said that their return to the Great Khan must be put off no longer. So they set out from Venice, taking Mark along with them, and went straight back to Acre, where they found the Legate of whom we have spoken. They had a good deal of discourse with him concerning the matter, and asked his permission to go to JERUSALEM to get some Oil from the Lamp on the Sepulchre, to carry with them to the Great Khan, as he had enjoined. The Legate giving them leave, they went from Acre to Jerusalem and got some of the Oil, and then returned to Acre, and went to the Legate and said to him: "As we see no sign of a Pope's being made, we desire to return to the Great Khan; for we have already tarried long, and there has been more than enough delay." To which the Legate replied: "Since 'tis your wish to go back, I am well content." Wherefore he caused letters to be written for delivery to the Great Khan, bearing testimony that the Two Brothers had come in all good faith to accomplish his charge, but that as there was no Pope they had been unable to do so.

CHAPTER XI

How the Two Brothers set out from Acre, and Mark along with them

When the Two Brothers had received the Legate's letters, they set forth from Acre to return to the Grand Khan, and got as far as Ayas. But shortly after their arrival there they had news that the Legate aforesaid was chosen Pope, taking the name of Pope Gregory of Piacenza; news which the Two Brothers were very glad indeed to hear. And presently there reached them at Ayas a message from the Legate, now the Pope, desiring them, on the part of the Apostolic See, not to proceed further on their journey, but to return to him incontinently. And what shall I tell you? The King of Armenia caused a galley to be got ready for the Two Ambassador Brothers, and despatched them to the Pope at Acre.

CHAPTER XII

How the Two Brothers presented themselves before the new Pope

And when they had been thus honourably conducted to Acre they proceeded to the presence of the Pope, and paid their respects to him with humble reverence. He received them with great honour and satisfaction, and gave them his blessing. He then appointed two Friars of the Order of Preachers to accompany them to the Great Khan, and to do whatever might be required of them. These were unquestionably as learned Churchmen as were to be found in the Province at that day—one being called Friar Nicolas of Vicenza, and the other Friar William of Tripoli. He delivered to them also proper credentials, and letters in reply to the Great Khan's messages [and gave them authority to ordain priests and bishops, and to

bestow every kind of absolution, as if given by himself in proper person; sending by them also many fine vessels of crystal as presents to the Great Khan]. So when they had got all that was needful, they took leave of the Pope, receiving his benediction; and the four set out together from Acre, and went to Ayas, accompanied always by Messer Nicolas's son Marco.

Now, about the time that they reached Ayas, Bundakdar, the Sultan of Babylon, invaded Armenia with a great host of Saracens, and ravaged the country, so that our Envoys ran a great peril of being taken or slain. And when the Preaching Friars saw this they were greatly frightened, and said that go they never would. So they made over to Messer Nicolas and Messer Maffeo all their credentials and documents, and took their leave, departing in company with the Master of the Temple.

CHAPTER XIII

How Messer Nicolo and Messer Maffeo Polo, accompanied by Mark, travelled to the Court of the Great Khan

So the Two Brothers, and Mark along with them, proceeded on their way, and journeying on, summer and winter, came at length to the Great Khan, who was then at a certain rich and great city, called Kaiminfu. As to what they met with on the road, whether in going or coming, we shall give no particulars at present, because we are going to tell you all those details in regular order in the after part of this Book. Their journey back to the Khan occupied a good three years and a half, owing to the bad weather and severe cold that they encountered. And let me tell you in good sooth that when the Great Khan heard that Messers Nicolo and Maffeo Polo were on their way back, he sent people a journey of full 40 days to meet them; and on this journey, as on their

former one, they were honourably entertained upon the road, and supplied with all that they required.

CHAPTER XIV

How Messer Nicolo and Messer Maffeo Polo and Marco presented themselves before the Great Khan

And what shall I tell you? when the Two Brothers and Mark had arrived at that great city, they went to the Imperial Palace, and there they found the Sovereign attended by a great company of Barons. So they bent the knee before him, and paid their respects to him, with all possible reverence [prostrating themselves on the ground]. Then the Lord bade them stand up, and treated them with great honour, showing great pleasure at their coming, and asked many questions as to their welfare, and how they had sped. They replied that they had in verity sped well, seeing that they found the Khan well and safe. Then they presented the credentials and letters which they had received from the Pope, which pleased him right well; and after that they produced the Oil from the Sepulchre, and at that also he was very glad, for he set great store thereby. And next, spying Mark, who was then a young gallant, he asked who was that in their company? "Sire," said his father, Messer Nicolo, "'tis my son and your liegeman." "Welcome is he too," quoth the Emperor. And why should I make a long story? There was great rejoicing at the Court because of their arrival; and they met with attention and honour from everybody.

So there they abode at the Court with the other Barons.

CHAPTER XV

How the Emperor sent Mark on an Embassy of his

Now it came to pass that Marco, the son of Messer Nicolo, sped wondrously in learning the customs of the Tartars, as well as their language, their manner of writing, and their practice of war; in fact he came in brief space to know several languages, and four sundry written characters. And he was discreet and prudent in every way, insomuch that the Emperor held him in great esteem. And so when he discerned Mark to have so much sense, and to conduct himself so well and beseemingly, he sent him on an ambassage of his, to a country which was a good six months' journey distant. The young gallant executed his commission well and with discretion. Now he had taken note on several occasions that when the Prince's ambassadors returned from different parts of the world, they were able to tell him about nothing except the business on which they had gone, and that the Prince in consequence held them for no better than fools and dolts, and would say: "I had far liever hearken about the strange things, and the manners of the different countries you have seen, than merely be told of the business you went upon;"—for he took great delight in hearing of the affairs of strange countries. Mark therefore, as he went and returned, took great pains to learn about all kinds of different matters in the countries which he visited, in order to be able to tell about them to the Great Khan.

CHAPTER XVI

How Mark returned from the Mission whereon he had been sent

When Mark returned from his ambassage he presented himself before the Emperor, and after making his report

of the business with which he was charged, and its successful accomplishment, he went on to give an account in a pleasant and intelligent manner of all the novelties and strange things that he had seen and heard; insomuch that the Emperor and all such as heard his story were surprised, and said: "If this young man live, he will assuredly come to be a person of great worth and ability." And so from that time forward he was always entitled Messer Marco Polo, and thus we shall style him henceforth in this Book of ours, as is but right.

Thereafter Messer Marco abode in the Khan's employment some seventeen years, continually going and coming, hither and thither, on the missions that were entrusted to him by the Lord [and sometimes, with the permission and authority of the Great Khan, on his own private affairs]. And, as he knew all the sovereign's ways, like a sensible man he always took much pains to gather knowledge of anything that would be likely to interest him, and then on his return to Court he would relate everything in regular order, and thus the Emperor came to hold him in great love and favour. And for this reason also he would employ him the oftener on the most weighty and most distant of his missions. These Messer Marco ever carried out with discretion and success, God be thanked. So the Emperor became ever more partial to him, and treated him with the greater distinction, and kept him so close to his person that some of the Barons waxed very envious thereat. And thus it came about that Messer Marco Polo had knowledge of, or had actually visited, a greater number of the different countries of the World than any other man; the more that he was always giving his mind to get knowledge, and to spy out and enquire into everything in order to have matter to relate to the Lord.

CHAPTER XVII

How Messer Nicolo, Messer Maffeo, and Messer Marco asked leave of the Great Khan to go their way

When the Two Brothers and Mark had abode with the Lord all that time that you have been told [having meanwhile acquired great wealth in jewels and gold], they began among themselves to have thoughts about returning to their own country; and indeed it was time. [For, to say nothing of the length and infinite perils of the way, when they considered the Khan's great age, they doubted whether, in the event of his death before their departure, they would ever be able to get home.] They applied to him several times for leave to go, presenting their request with great respect, but he had such a partiality for them, and liked so much to have them about him, that nothing on earth would persuade him to let them go.

Now it came to pass in those days that the Queen Bulughan, wife of Arghun, Lord of the Levant, departed this life. And in her Will she had desired that no Lady should take her place, or succeed her as Arghun's wife, except one of her own family [which existed in Cathay]. Arghun therefore despatched three of his Barons, by name respectively Uladai, Apushka, and Koja, as ambassadors to the Great Khan, attended by a very gallant company, in order to bring back as his bride a lady of the family of Queen Bulughan, his late wife.

When these three Barons had reached the Court of the Great Khan, they delivered their message, explaining wherefore they were come. The Khan received them with all honour and hospitality, and then sent for a lady whose name was Kukachin, who was of the family of the deceased Queen Bulughan. She was a maiden of

17, a very beautiful and charming person, and on her arrival at Court she was presented to the three Barons as the Lady chosen in compliance with their demand. They declared that the Lady pleased them well.

Meanwhile Messer Marco chanced to return from India, whither he had gone as the Lord's ambassador, and made his report of all the different things that he had seen in his travels, and of the sundry seas over which he had voyaged. And the three Barons, having seen that Messer Nicolo, Messer Maffeo, and Messer Marco were not only Latins, but men of marvellous good sense withal, took thought among themselves to get the three to travel with them, their intention being to return to their country by sea, on account of the great fatigue of that long land journey for a lady. And the ambassadors were the more desirous to have their company, as being aware that those three had great knowledge and experience of the Indian Sea and the countries by which they would have to pass, and especially Messer Marco. So they went to the Great Khan, and begged as a favour that he would send the three Latins with them, as it was their desire to return home by sea.

The Lord, having that great regard that I have mentioned for those three Latins, was very loath to do so [and his countenance showed great dissatisfaction]. But at last he did give them permission to depart, enjoining them to accompany the three Barons and the Lady.

CHAPTER XVIII

How the Two Brothers and Messer Marco took leave of the Great Khan, and returned to their own Country

And when the Prince saw that the Two Brothers and Messer Marco were ready to set forth, he called them all three to his presence, and gave them two golden

Tablets of Authority, which should secure them liberty of passage through all his dominions, and by means of which, whithersoever they should go, all necessaries would be provided for them, and for all their company, and whatever they might choose to order. He charged them also with messages to the King of France, the King of England, the King of Spain, and the other kings of Christendom. He then caused thirteen ships to be equipt, each of which had four masts, and often spread twelve sails. And I could easily give you all particulars about these, but as it would be so long an affair I will not enter upon this now, but hereafter, when time and place are suitable. [Among the said ships were at least four or five that carried crews of 250 or 260 men.]

And when the ships had been equipt, the Three Barons and the Lady, and the Two Brothers and Messer Marco, took leave of the Great Khan, and went on board their ships with a great company of people, and with all necessaries provided for two years by the Emperor. They put forth to sea, and after sailing for some three months they arrived at a certain Island towards the South, which is called JAVA, and in which there are many wonderful things which we shall tell you all about by-and-bye. Quitting this Island they continued to navigate the Sea of India for eighteen months more before they arrived whither they were bound, meeting on their way also with many marvels, of which we shall tell hereafter.

And when they got thither they found that Arghun was dead, so the Lady was delivered to GHAZAN, his son.

But I should have told you that it is a fact that, when they embarked, they were in number some 600 persons, without counting the mariners; but nearly all died by the way, so that only eight survived.

The sovereignty when they arrived was held by KAIKHATU, so they commended the Lady to him, and executed all their commission. And when the Two Brothers and Messer Marco had executed their charge in full, and

done all that the Great Khan had enjoined on them in regard to the Lady, they took their leave and set out upon their journey. And before their departure, Kaikhatu gave them four golden tablets of authority, two of which bore gerfalcons, one bore lions, whilst the fourth was plain, and having on them inscriptions which directed that the three Ambassadors should receive honour and service all through the land as if rendered to the Prince in person, and that horses and all provisions, and everything necessary, should be supplied to them. And so they found in fact; for throughout the country they received ample and excellent supplies of everything needful; and many a time indeed, as I may tell you, they were furnished with 200 horsemen, more or less, to escort them on their way in safety. And this was all the more needful because Kaikhatu was not the legitimate Lord, and therefore the people had less scruple to do mischief than if they had had a lawful prince.

Another thing too must be mentioned, which does credit to those three Ambassadors, and shows for what great personages they were held. The Great Khan regarded them with such trust and affection, that he had confided to their charge the Queen Kukachin, as well as the daughter of the King of Manzi, to conduct to Arghun the Lord of all the Levant. And those two great ladies who were thus entrusted to them they watched over and guarded as if they had been daughters of their own, until they had transferred them to the hands of their Lord; whilst the ladies, young and fair as they were, looked on each of those three as a father, and obeyed them accordingly. Indeed, both Ghazan, who is now the reigning prince, and the Queen Kukachin his wife, have such a regard for the Envoys that there is nothing they would not do for them. And when the three Ambassadors took leave of that Lady to return to their own country, she wept for sorrow at the parting.

What more shall I say? Having left Kaikhatu they

travelled day by day till they came to Trebizond, and thence to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Negropont, and from Negropont to Venice. And this was in the year 1295 of Christ's Incarnation.

And now that I have rehearsed all the Prologue as you have heard, we shall begin the Book of the Description of the Divers Things that Messer Marco met with in his Travels.

BOOK FIRST

ACCOUNT OF REGIONS VISITED OR HEARD OF ON THE JOURNEY FROM THE LESSER ARMENIA TO THE COURT OF THE GREAT KHAN AT SHANGTU

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

Here the Book begins; and first it speaks of the Lesser Armenia

There are two Armenias, the Greater and the Less. The Lesser Armenia is governed by a certain King, who maintains a just rule in his dominions, but is himself subject to the Tartar. The country contains numerous towns and villages, and has everything in plenty; moreover, it is a great country for sport in the chase of all manner of beasts and birds. It is, however, by no means a healthy region, but grievously the reverse. In days of old the nobles there were valiant men, and did doughty deeds of arms; but nowadays they are poor creatures, and good at nought, unless it be at boozing; they are great at that. Howbeit, they have a city upon the sea, which is called Ayas, at which there is a great trade. For you must know that all the spicery, and the cloths of silk and gold, and the other valuable wares that come from the interior, are brought to that city. And the merchants of Venice and Genoa, and other countries, come thither to sell their goods, and to buy what they lack. And whatsoever persons would travel to the interior (of the East), merchants or others, they take their way by this city of Ayas.

Having now told you about the Lesser Armenia, we shall next tell you about Turcomania.

CHAPTER II

Concerning the Province of Turcomania

In Turcomania there are three classes of people. First, there are the Turcomans; these are worshippers of Mahommet, a rude people with an uncouth language of their own. They dwell among mountains and downs where they find good pasture, for their occupation is cattle-keeping. Excellent horses, known as *Turquans*, are reared in their country, and also very valuable mules. The other two classes are the Armenians and the Greeks, who live mixt with the former in the towns and villages, occupying themselves with trade and handicrafts. They weave the finest and handsomest carpets in the world, and also a great quantity of fine and rich silks of cramoisy and other colours, and plenty of other stuffs. Their chief cities are Konieh, Sivas [where the glorious Messer Saint Blaise suffered martyrdom], and Caesarea, besides many other towns and bishops' sees, of which we shall not speak at present, for it would be too long a matter. These people are subject to the Tartar of the Levant as their Suzerain. We will now leave this province, and speak of the Greater Armenia.

CHAPTER III

Description of the Greater Armenia

This is a great country. It begins at a city called Erzinjan, at which they weave the best buckrams in the world. It possesses also the best baths from natural springs that are anywhere to be found. The people of the country are Armenians, and are subject to the Tartar. There are many towns and villages in the country, but the noblest of their cities is Erzinjan, which is the See of an Archbishop, and then Erzerum and Arjish.

The country is indeed a passing great one, and in the summer it is frequented by the whole host of the Tartars of the Levant, because it then furnishes them with such excellent pasture for their cattle. But in winter the cold is past all bounds, so in that season they quit this country and go to a warmer region, where they find other good pastures. [At a castle called BAIBURT, that you pass in going from Trebizond to Tauris, there is a very good silver mine.]

And you must know that it is in this country of Armenia that the Ark of Noah exists on the top of a certain great mountain [on the summit of which snow is so constant that no one can ascend; for the snow never melts, and is constantly added to by new falls. Below, however, the snow does melt, and runs down, producing such rich and abundant herbage that in summer cattle are sent to pasture from a long way round about, and it never fails them. The melting snow also causes a great amount of mud on the mountain].

The country is bounded on the south by a kingdom called Mosul, the people of which are Jacobite and Nestorian Christians, of whom I shall have more to tell you presently. On the north it is bounded by the Land of the Georgians, of whom also I shall speak. On the confines towards Georgia there is a fountain from which oil springs in great abundance, insomuch that a hundred shiploads might be taken from it at one time. This oil is not good to use with food, but 'tis good to burn, and is also used to anoint camels that have the mange. People come from vast distances to fetch it, for in all the countries round about they have no other oil.

Now, having done with Great Armenia, we will tell you of Georgia.

CHAPTER IV

Of Georgia and the Kings thereof

In Georgia there is a King called David Melic, which is as much as to say "David King"; he is subject to the Tartar. In old times all the kings were born with the figure of an eagle upon the right shoulder. The people are very handsome, capital archers, and most valiant soldiers. They are Christians of the Greek Rite, and have a fashion of wearing their hair cropped, like Churchmen.

This is the country beyond which Alexander could not pass when he wished to penetrate to the region of the Ponent, because that the defile was so narrow and perilous, the sea lying on the one hand, and on the other lofty mountains impassable to horsemen. The strait extends like this for four leagues, and a handful of people might hold it against all the world. Alexander caused a very strong tower to be built there, to prevent the people beyond from passing to attack him, and this got the name of the Iron Gate. This is the place that the Book of Alexander speaks of, when it tells us how he shut up the Tartars between two mountains; not that they were really Tartars, however, for there were no Tartars in those days, but they consisted of a race of people called Comanians and many besides.

[In this province all the forests are of box-wood.] There are numerous towns and villages, and silk is produced in great abundance. They also weave cloths of gold, and all kinds of very fine silk stuffs. The country produces the best goshawks in the world [which are called *Avigi*]. It has indeed no lack of anything, and the people live by trade and handicrafts. 'Tis a very mountainous region, and full of strait defiles and of fortresses, insomuch that the Tartars have never been able to subdue it out and out.

There is in this country a certain Convent of Nuns called St. Leonard's, about which I have to tell you a very wonderful circumstance. Near the church in question there is a great lake at the foot of a mountain, and in this lake are found no fish, great or small, throughout the year till Lent come. On the first day of Lent they find in it the finest fish in the world, and great store too thereof; and these continue to be found till Easter Eve. After that they are found no more till Lent come round again; and so 'tis every year. 'Tis really a passing great miracle!

That sea whereof I spoke as coming so near the mountains is called the Sea of Ghel or Ghelan, and extends about 700 miles. It is twelve days' journey distant from any other sea, and into it flows the great River Euphrates and many others, whilst it is surrounded by mountains. Of late the merchants of Genoa have begun to navigate this sea, carrying ships across and launching them thereon. It is from the country on this sea also that the silk called *Ghella* is brought. [The said sea produces quantities of fish, especially sturgeon, at the river-mouths salmon, and other big kinds of fish.]

CHAPTER V

Of the Kingdom of Mosul

On the frontier of Armenia towards the south-east is the kingdom of Mosul. It is a very great kingdom, and inhabited by several different kinds of people whom we shall now describe.

First there is a kind of people called Arabs, and these worship Mahommet. Then there is another description of people who are Nestorian and Jacobite Christians. These have a Patriarch, whom they call the Jatolic, and this Patriarch creates Archbishops, and Abbots, and Prelates of all other degrees, and sends them into every

quarter, as to India, to Bagdad, or to Cathay, just as the Pope of Rome does in the Latin countries. For you must know that though there is a very great number of Christians in those countries, they are all Jacobites and Nestorians; Christians indeed, but not in the fashion enjoined by the Pope of Rome, for they come short in several points of the Faith.

All the cloths of gold and silk that are called *Mosolins* are made in this country; and those great Merchants called *Mosolins*, who carry for sale such quantities of spicery and pearls and cloths of silk and gold, are also from this kingdom.

There is yet another race of people who inhabit the mountains in that quarter, and are called KURDS. Some of them are Christians, and some of them are Saracens; but they are an evil generation, whose delight it is to plunder merchants.

[Near this province is another called MUSH and MARDIN, producing an immense quantity of cotton, from which they make a great deal of buckram and other cloth. The people are craftsmen and traders, and are all subject to the Tartar King.]

CHAPTER VI

OF THE GREAT CITY OF BAGDAD, AND HOW IT WAS TAKEN

BAGDAD is a great city, which used to be the seat of the Calif of all the Saracens in the world, just as Rome is the seat of the Pope of all the Christians. A very great river flows through the city, and by this you can descend to the Sea of India. There is a great traffic of merchants with their goods this way; they descend some eighteen days from Bagdad, and then come to a certain city called KISH, where they enter the Sea of India. There is also on the river, as you go from Bagdad to Kish, a great city

called BASRA, surrounded by woods, in which grow the best dates in the world.

In Bagdad they weave many different kinds of silk stuffs and gold brocades, such as *nasich*, and *nac*, and *cramoisy*, and many another beautiful tissue richly wrought with figures of beasts and birds. It is the noblest and greatest city in all those regions.

Now it came to pass on a day in the year of Christ 1255, that the Lord of the Tartars of the Levant, whose name was Hulagu, brother to the Great Khan now reigning, gathered a mighty host and came up against Bagdad and took it by storm. It was a great enterprise! for in Bagdad there were more than 100,000 horse, besides foot soldiers. And when Hulagu had taken the place he found therein a tower of the Calif's, which was full of gold and silver and other treasure; in fact the greatest accumulation of treasure in one spot that ever was known. When he beheld that great heap of treasure he was astonished, and, summoning the Calif to his presence, he said to him: "Calif, tell me now why thou hast gathered such a huge treasure? What didst thou mean to do therewith? Knewest thou not that I was thine enemy, and that I was coming against thee with so great an host to cast thee forth of thine heritage? Wherefore didst thou not take of thy gear and employ it in paying knights and soldiers to defend thee and thy city?"

The Calif wist not what to answer, and said never a word. So the Prince continued, "Now then, Calif, since I see what a love thou hast borne thy treasure, I will e'en give it thee to eat!" So he shut the Calif up in the Treasure Tower, and bade that neither meat nor drink should be given him, saying, "Now, Calif, eat of thy treasure as much as thou wilt, since thou art so fond of it; for never shalt thou have aught else to eat!"

So the Calif lingered in the tower four days, and then died like a dog. Truly his treasure would have been of

more service to him had he bestowed it upon men who would have defended his kingdom and his people, rather than let himself be taken and deposed and put to death as he was. Howbeit, since that time, there has been never another Calif, either at Bagdad or anywhere else.

Now I will tell you of a great miracle that befell at Bagdad, wrought by God on behalf of the Christians.

CHAPTER VII

How the Calif of Bagdad took counsel to slay all the Christians in his Land

I will tell you then this great marvel that occurred between Bagdad and Mosul.

It was in the year of Christ . . . that there was a Calif at Bagdad who bore a great hatred to Christians, and was taken up day and night with the thought how he might either bring those that were in his kingdom over to his own faith, or might procure them all to be slain. And he used daily to take counsel about this with the devotees and priests of his faith, for they all bore the Christians like malice. And, indeed, it is a fact, that the whole body of Saracens throughout the world are always most malignantly disposed towards the whole body of Christians.

Now it happened that the Calif, with those shrewd priests of his, got hold of that passage in our Gospel which says, that if a Christian had faith as a grain of mustard seed, and should bid a mountain be removed, it would be removed. And such indeed is the truth. But when they had got hold of this text they were delighted, for it seemed to them the very thing whereby either to force all the Christians to change their faith, or to bring destruction upon them all. The Calif therefore called together all the Christians in his territories, who were extremely numerous. And when they had come

before him, he showed them the Gospel, and made them read the text which I have mentioned. And when they had read it he asked them if that was the truth? The Christians answered that it assuredly was so. "Well," said the Calif, "since you say that it is the truth, I will give you a choice. Among such a number of you there must needs surely be this small amount of faith; so you must either move that mountain there,"—and he pointed to a mountain in the neighbourhood—"or you shall die an ill death; unless you choose to eschew death by all becoming Saracens and adopting our Holy Law. To this end I give you a respite of ten days; if the thing be not done by that time, ye shall die or become Saracens." And when he had said this he dismissed them, to consider what was to be done in this strait wherein they were.

CHAPTER VIII

How the Christians were in great dismay because of what the Calif had said

The Christians on hearing what the Calif had said were in great dismay, but they lifted all their hopes to God, their Creator, that He would help them in this their strait. All the wisest of the Christians took counsel together, and among them were a number of bishops and priests, but they had no resource except to turn to Him from whom all good things do come, beseeching Him to protect them from the cruel hands of the Calif.

So they were all gathered together in prayer, both men and women, for eight days and eight nights. And whilst they were thus engaged in prayer it was revealed in a vision by a Holy Angel of Heaven to a certain Bishop who was a very good Christian, that he should desire a certain Christian Cobbler, who had but one eye, to pray to God; and that God in His goodness would grant such prayer because of the Cobbler's holy life.

Now I must tell you what manner of man this Cobbler was. He was one who led a life of great uprightness and chastity, and who fasted and kept from all sin, and went daily to church to hear Mass, and gave daily a portion of his gains to God. And the way how he came to have but one eye was this. It happened one day that a certain woman came to him to have a pair of shoes made, and she showed him her foot that he might take her measure. Now she had a very beautiful foot and leg; and the Cobbler in taking her measure was conscious of sinful thoughts. And he had often heard it said in the Holy Evangel, that if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee, rather than sin. So, as soon as the woman had departed, he took the awl that he used in stitching, and drove it into his eye and destroyed it. And this is the way he came to lose his eye. So you can judge what a holy, just, and righteous man he was.

CHAPTER IX

How the One-eyed Cobbler was desired to pray for the Christians

Now when this vision had visited the Bishop several times, he related the whole matter to the Christians, and they agreed with one consent to call the Cobbler before them. And when he had come they told him it was their wish that he should pray, and that God had promised to accomplish the matter by his means. On hearing their request he made many excuses, declaring that he was not at all so good a man as they represented. But they persisted in their request with so much sweetness, that at last he said he would not tarry, but do what they desired.

CHAPTER X

How the Prayer of the One-eyed Cobbler caused the Mountain to move

And when the appointed day was come, all the Christians got up early, men and women, small and great, more than 100,000 persons, and went to church, and heard the Holy Mass. And after Mass had been sung, they all went forth together in a great procession to the plain in front of the mountain, carrying the precious cross before them, loudly singing and greatly weeping as they went. And when they arrived at the spot, there they found the Calif with all his Saracen host armed to slay them if they would not change their faith; for the Saracens believed not in the least that God would grant such favour to the Christians. These latter stood indeed in great fear and doubt, but nevertheless they rested their hope on their God Jesus Christ.

So the Cobbler received the Bishop's benison, and then threw himself on his knees before the Holy Cross, and stretched out his hands towards Heaven, and made this prayer: "Blessed Lord God Almighty, I pray Thee by Thy goodness that Thou wilt grant this grace unto Thy people, insomuch that they perish not, nor Thy faith be cast down, nor abused nor flouted. Not that I am in the least worthy to prefer such request unto Thee; but for Thy great power and mercy I beseech Thee to hear this prayer from me Thy servant full of sin."

And when he had ended this his prayer to God the Sovereign Father and Giver of all grace, and whilst the Calif and all the Saracens, and other people there, were looking on, the mountain rose out of its place and moved to the spot which the Calif had pointed out! And when the Calif and all his Saracens beheld, they stood amazed at the wonderful miracle that God had wrought for the

Christians, insomuch that a great number of the Saracens became Christians. And even the Calif caused himself to be baptised in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen, and became a Christian, but in secret. Howbeit, when he died they found a little cross hung round his neck; and therefore the Saracens would not bury him with the other Califs, but put him in a place apart. The Christians exulted greatly at this most holy miracle, and returned to their homes full of joy, giving thanks to their Creator for that which He had done.

And now you have heard in what wise took place this great miracle. And marvel not that the Saracens hate the Christians; for the accursed law that Mahommet gave them commands them to do all the mischief in their power to all other descriptions of people, and especially to Christians; to strip such of their goods, and do them all manner of evil, because they belong not to their law. See then what an evil law and what naughty commandments they have! But in such fashion the Saracens act, throughout the world.

Now I have told you something of Bagdad. I could easily indeed have told you first of the affairs and the customs of the people there. But it would be too long a business, looking to the great and strange things that I have got to tell you, as you will find detailed in this Book.

So now I will tell you of the noble city of Tauris.

CHAPTER XI

Of the Noble City of Tauris

Tauris is a great and noble city, situated in a great province called Irak, in which are many other towns and villages. But as Tauris is the most noble I will tell you about it.

The men of Tauris get their living by trade and handicrafts, for they weave many kinds of beautiful and valuable stuffs of silk and gold. The city has such a good position that merchandize is brought thither from India, Bagdad, Cremesor, and many other regions; and that attracts many Latin merchants, especially Genoese, to buy goods and transact other business there; the more as it is also a great market for precious stones. It is a city in fact where merchants make large profits.

The people of the place are themselves poor creatures; and are a great medley of different classes. There are Armenians, Nestorians, Jacobites, Georgians, Persians, and finally the natives of the city themselves, who are worshippers of Mahommet. These last are a very evil generation; they are known as Taurizi. The city is all girt round with charming gardens, full of many varieties of large and excellent fruits.

Now we will quit Tauris, and speak of the great country of Persia. [From Tauris to Persia is a journey of twelve days.]

CHAPTER XII

Of the Monastery of St. Barsauma on the Borders of Tauris

On the borders of (the territory of) Tauris there is a monastery called after Saint Barsauma, a most devout Saint. There is an Abbot, with many Monks, who wear a habit like that of the Carmelites, and these to avoid idleness are continually knitting woollen girdles. These they place upon the altar of Saint Barsauma during the service, and when they go begging about the province (like the Brethren of the Holy Spirit) they present them to their friends and to the gentlefolks, for they are excellent things to remove bodily pain; wherefore every one is devoutly eager to possess them.

CHAPTER XIII

Of the Great Country of Persia; with some account of the Three Kings

Persia is a great country, which was in old times very illustrious and powerful; but now the Tartars have wasted and destroyed it.

In Persia is the city of Saba, from which the Three Magi set out when they went to worship Jesus Christ; and in this city they are buried, in three very large and beautiful monuments, side by side. And above them there is a square building, carefully kept. The bodies are still entire, with the hair and beard remaining. One of these was called Gaspar, the second Melchior, and the third Balthasar. Messer Marco Polo asked a great many questions of the people of that city as to these Three Magi, but never one could he find that knew aught of the matter, except that these were three kings who were buried there in days of old. However, at a place three days' journey distant he heard of what I am going to tell you. He found a village there which goes by the name of Cala Ataperistan, which is as much as to say, "The Castle of the Fire-worshippers." And the name is rightly applied, for the people there do worship fire, and I will tell you why.

They relate that in old times three kings of that country went away to worship a Prophet that was born, and they carried with them three manner of offerings, Gold, and Frankincense, and Myrrh; in order to ascertain whether that Prophet were God, or an earthly King, or a Physician. For, said they, if he take the Gold, then he is an earthly King; if he take the Incense he is God; if he take the Myrrh he is a Physician.

So it came to pass when they had come to the place where the Child was born, the youngest of the Three Kings went in first, and found the Child apparently

just of his own age; so he went forth again marvelling greatly. The middle one entered next, and like the first he found the Child seemingly of his own age; so he also went forth again and marvelled greatly. Lastly, the eldest went in, and as it had befallen the other two, so it befell him. And he went forth very pensive. And when the three had rejoined one another, each told what he had seen; and then they all marvelled the more. So they agreed to go in all three together, and on doing so they beheld the Child with the appearance of its actual age, to wit, some thirteen days. Then they adored, and presented their Gold and Incense and Myrrh. And the Child took all the three offerings, and then gave them a small closed box; whereupon the Kings departed to return into their own land.

CHAPTER XIV

What befell when the Three Kings returned to their own Country

And when they had ridden many days they said they would see what the Child had given them. So they opened the little box, and inside it they found a stone. On seeing this they began to wonder what this might be that the Child had given them, and what was the import thereof. Now the signification was this: when they presented their offerings, the Child had accepted all three, and when they saw that they had said within themselves that He was the True God, and the True King, and the True Physician. And what the gift of the stone implied was that this Faith which had begun in them should abide firm as a rock. For He well knew what was in their thoughts. Howbeit, they had no understanding at all of this signification of the gift of the stone; so they cast it into a well. Then straightway a fire from Heaven descended into that well wherein the stone had been cast.

And when the Three Kings beheld this marvel they were sore amazed, and it greatly repented them that they had cast away the stone; for well they then perceived that it had a great and holy meaning. So they took of that fire, and carried it into their own country, and placed it in a rich and beautiful church. And there the people keep it continually burning, and worship it as a god, and all the sacrifices they offer are kindled with that fire. And if ever the fire becomes extinct they go to other cities round about where the same faith is held, and obtain of that fire from them, and carry it to the church. And this is the reason why the people of this country worship fire. They will often go ten days' journey to get of that fire.

Such then was the story told by the people of that Castle to Messer Marco Polo; they declared to him for a truth that such was their history, and that one of the three kings was of the city called Saba, and the second of Ava, and the third of that very Castle where they still worship fire, with the people of all the country round about.

Having related this story, I will now tell you of the different provinces of Persia, and their peculiarities.

CHAPTER XV

Of the Eight Kingdoms of Persia, and how they are named

Now you must know that Persia is a very great country, and contains eight kingdoms. I will tell you the names of them all.

The first kingdom is that at the beginning of Persia, and it is called Kasvin; the second is further to the south, and is called Kurdistan; the third is Luristan; the fourth [Shulistan]; the fifth Ispahan; the sixth Shiraz; the seventh Shawankara; the eighth Tunokain, which is at the further extremity of Persia. All these kingdoms

lie in a southerly direction except one, to wit, Tunokain; that lies towards the east, and borders on the (country of the) Arbre Sol.

In this country of Persia there is a great supply of fine horses; and people take them to India for sale, for they are horses of great price, a single one being worth as much of their money as is equal to 200 livres Tournois; some will be more, some less, according to the quality. Here also are the finest asses in the world, one of them being worth full 30 marks of silver, for they are very large and fast, and acquire a capital amble. Dealers carry their horses to Kish and Ormuz, two cities on the shores of the Sea of India, and there they meet with merchants who take the horses on to India for sale.

In this country there are many cruel and murderous people, so that no day passes but there is some homicide among them. Were it not for the Government, which is that of the Tartars of the Levant, they would do great mischief to merchants; and indeed, maugre the Government, they often succeed in doing such mischief. Unless merchants be well armed they run the risk of being murdered, or at least robbed of everything; and it sometimes happens that a whole party perishes in this way when not on their guard. The people are all Saracens, *i.e.* followers of the Law of Mahommet.

In the cities there are traders and artizans who live by their labour and crafts, weaving cloths of gold, and silk stuffs of sundry kinds. They have plenty of cotton produced in the country; and abundance of wheat, barley, millet, panick, and wine, with fruits of all kinds.

[Some one may say, "But the Saracens don't drink wine, which is prohibited by their law." The answer is that they gloss their text in this way, that if the wine be boiled, so that a part is dissipated and the rest becomes sweet, they may drink without breach of the commandment; for it is then no longer called wine, the name being changed with the change of flavour.]

CHAPTER XVI

Concerning the Great City of Yezd

Yezd also is properly in Persia; it is a good and noble city, and has a great amount of trade. They weave there quantities of a certain silk tissue known as *Yesdi*, which merchants carry into many quarters to dispose of. The people are worshippers of Mahommet.

When you leave this city to travel further, you ride for seven days over great plains, finding harbour to receive you at three places only. There are many fine woods [producing dates] upon the way, such as one can easily ride through; and in them there is great sport to be had in hunting and hawking, there being partridges and quails and abundance of other game, so that the merchants who pass that way have plenty of diversion. There are also wild asses, handsome creatures. At the end of those seven marches over the plain you come to a fine kingdom which is called Kirman.

CHAPTER XVII

Concerning the Kingdom of Kirman

Kirman is a kingdom which is also properly in Persia, and formerly it had a hereditary prince. Since the Tartars conquered the country the rule is no longer hereditary, but the Tartar sends to administer whatever lord he pleases. In this kingdom are produced the stones called turquoises in great abundance; they are found in the mountains, where they are extracted from the rocks. There are also plenty of veins of steel and *Ondanique*. The people are very skilful in making harness of war; their saddles, bridles, spurs, swords, bows, quivers, and arms of every kind, are very well made indeed ac-

cording to the fashion of those parts. The ladies of the country and their daughters also produce exquisite needlework in the embroidery of silk stuffs in different colours, with figures of beasts and birds, trees and flowers, and a variety of other patterns. They work hangings for the use of noblemen so deftly that they are marvels to see, as well as cushions, pillows, quilts, and all sorts of things.

In the mountains of Kirman are found the best falcons in the world. They are inferior in size to the Peregrine, red on the breast, under the neck, and between the thighs; their flight so swift that no bird can escape them.

On quitting the city you ride on for seven days, always finding towns, villages, and handsome dwelling-houses, so that it is very pleasant travelling; and there is excellent sport also to be had by the way in hunting and hawking. When you have ridden those seven days over a plain country, you come to a great mountain; and when you have got to the top of the pass you find a great descent which occupies some two days to go down. All along you find a variety and abundance of fruits; and in former days there were plenty of inhabited places on the road, but now there are none; and you meet with only a few people looking after their cattle at pasture. From the city of Kirman to this descent the cold in winter is so great that you can scarcely abide it, even with a great quantity of clothing.

CHAPTER XVIII

Of the City of Kamadin and its Ruins; also touching the Karaunah Robbers

After you have ridden down hill those two days, you find yourself in a vast plain, and at the beginning thereof there is a city called Kamadin, which formerly was a

great and noble place, but now is of little consequence, for the Tartars in their incursions have several times ravaged it. The plain whereof I speak is a very hot region; and the province that we now enter is called Reobarles.

The fruits of the country are dates, pistachioes, and apples of Paradise, with others of the like not found in our cold climate. [There are vast numbers of turtle-doves, attracted by the abundance of fruits, but the Saracens never take them, for they hold them in abomination.] And on this plain there is a kind of bird called francolin, but different from the francolin of other countries, for their colour is a mixture of black and white, and the feet and beak are vermilion colour.

The beasts also are peculiar; and first I will tell you of their oxen. These are very large, and all over white as snow; the hair is very short and smooth, which is owing to the heat of the country. The horns are short and thick, not sharp in the point; and between the shoulders they have a round hump some two palms high. There are no handsomer creatures in the world. And when they have to be loaded, they kneel like the camel; once the load is adjusted, they rise. Their load is a heavy one, for they are very strong animals. Then there are sheep here as big as asses; and their tails are so large and fat, that one tail shall weigh some 30 lbs. They are fine fat beasts, and afford capital mutton.

In this plain there are a number of villages and towns which have lofty walls of mud, made as a defence against the banditti, who are very numerous, and are called Karaunahs. This name is given them because they are the sons of Indian mothers by Tartar fathers. And you must know that when these Karaunahs wish to make a plundering incursion, they have certain devilish enchantments whereby they do bring darkness over the face of day, insomuch that you can scarcely discern your comrade riding beside you; and this darkness they will

cause to extend over a space of seven days' journey. They know the country thoroughly, and ride abreast, keeping near one another, sometimes to the number of 10,000, at other times more or fewer. In this way they extend across the whole plain that they are going to harry, and catch every living thing that is found outside of the towns and villages; man, woman, or beast, nothing can escape them! The old men whom they take in this way they butcher; the young men and the women they sell for slaves in other countries; thus the whole land is ruined, and has become well-nigh a desert.

The King of these scoundrels is called NOGODAR. This Nogodar had gone to the Court of Jagatai, who was own brother to the Great Khan, with some 10,000 horsemen of his, and abode with him; for Jagatai was his uncle. And whilst there this Nogodar devised a most audacious enterprise, and I will tell you what it was. He left his uncle who was then in Greater Armenia, and fled with a great body of horsemen, cruel unscrupulous fellows, first through BADAKSHAN, and then through another province called PASHAI-DIR, and then through another called ARIORA-KASHMIR. There he lost a great number of his people and of his horses, for the roads were very narrow and perilous. And when he had conquered all those provinces, he entered India at the extremity of a province called DALIVAR. He established himself in that city and government, which he took from the King of the country, ASEDIN SULTAN by name, a man of great power and wealth. And there abideth Nogodar with his army, afraid of nobody, and waging war with all the Tartars in his neighbourhood.

Now that I have told you of those scoundrels and their history, I must add the fact that Messer Marco himself was all but caught by their bands in such a darkness as that I have told you of; but, as it pleased God, he got off and threw himself into a village that was hard by, called CONOSALMI. Howbeit he lost his whole com-

pany except seven persons who escaped along with him. The rest were caught, and some of them sold, some put to death.

CHAPTER XIX

Of the Descent to the City of Ormuz

The Plain of which we have spoken extends in a southerly direction for five days' journey, and then you come to another descent some twenty miles in length, where the road is very bad and full of peril, for there are many robbers and bad characters about. When you have got to the foot of this descent you find another beautiful plain called the Plain of Formosa. This extends for two days' journey; and you find in it fine streams of water with plenty of date-palms and other fruit-trees. There are also many beautiful birds, francolins, popinjays, and other kinds such as we have none of in our country. When you have ridden these two days you come to the Ocean Sea, and on the shore you find a city with a harbour which is called Ormuz. Merchants come thither from India, with ships loaded with spicery and precious stones, pearls, cloths of silk and gold, elephants' teeth, and many other wares, which they sell to the merchants of Ormuz, and which these in turn carry all over the world to dispose of again. In fact, 'tis a city of immense trade. There are plenty of towns and villages under it, but it is the capital. The King is called Rokneddin Mahmud. It is a very sickly place, and the heat of the sun is tremendous. If any foreign merchant dies there, the King takes all his property.

In this country they make a wine of dates mixt with spices, which is very good. When any one not used to it first drinks this wine, it causes repeated and violent purging, but afterwards he is all the better for it, and gets fat upon it. The people never eat meat and wheaten bread except when they are ill, and if they take such food

when they are in health it makes them ill. Their food when in health consists of dates and salt-fish (tunny, to wit) and onions, and this kind of diet they maintain in order to preserve their health.

Their ships are wretched affairs, and many of them get lost; for they have no iron fastenings, and are only stitched together with twine made from the husk of the Indian nut. They beat this husk until it becomes like horse-hair, and from that they spin twine, and with this stitch the planks of the ships together. It keeps well, and is not corroded by the sea-water, but it will not stand well in a storm. The ships are not pitched, but are rubbed with fish-oil. They have one mast, one sail, and one rudder, and have no deck, but only a cover spread over the cargo when loaded. This cover consists of hides, and on the top of these hides they put the horses which they take to India for sale. They have no iron to make nails of, and for this reason they use only wooden trenails in their shipbuilding, and then stitch the planks with twine as I have told you. Hence 'tis a perilous business to go a voyage in one of those ships, and many of them are lost, for in that Sea of India the storms are often terrible.

The people are black, and are worshippers of Mahommet. The residents avoid living in the cities, for the heat in summer is so great that it would kill them. Hence they go out (to sleep) at their gardens in the country, where there are streams and plenty of water. For all that they would not escape but for one thing that I will mention. The fact is, you see, that in summer a wind often blows across the sands which encompass the plain, so intolerably hot that it would kill everybody, were it not that when they perceive that wind coming they plunge into water up to the neck, and so abide until the wind have ceased. [And to prove the great heat of this wind, Messer Mark related a case that befell when he was there. The Lord of Ormuz, not having paid his tribute to the King of Kirman, the latter resolved to claim

it at the time when the people of Ormuz were residing away from the city. So he caused a force of 1600 horse and 5000 foot to be got ready, and sent them by the route of Reobarles to take the others by surprise. Now, it happened one day that through the fault of their guide they were not able to reach the place appointed for their night's halt, and were obliged to bivouac in a wilderness not far from Ormuz. In the morning as they were starting on their march they were caught by that wind, and every man of them was suffocated, so that not one survived to carry the tidings to their Lord. When the people of Ormuz heard of this they went forth to bury the bodies lest they should breed a pestilence. But when they laid hold of them by the arms to drag them to the pits, the bodies proved to be so *baked*, as it were, by that tremendous heat, that the arms parted from the trunks, and in the end the people had to dig graves hard by each where it lay, and so cast them in.]

The people sow their wheat and barley and other corn in the month of November, and reap it in the month of March. The dates are not gathered till May, but otherwise there is no grass nor any other green thing, for the excessive heat dries up everything.

When any one dies they make a great business of the mourning, for women mourn their husbands four years. During that time they mourn at least once a day, gathering together their kinsfolk and friends and neighbours for the purpose, and making a great weeping and wailing. [And they have women who are mourners by trade, and do it for hire.]

Now, we will quit this country. I shall not, however, now go on to tell you about India; but when time and place shall suit we shall come round from the north and tell you about it. For the present, let us return by another road to the aforesaid city of Kirman, for we cannot get at those countries that I wish to tell you about except through that city.

I should tell you first, however, that King Rokneddin Mahmud of Ormuz, which we are leaving, is a liegeman of the King of Kirman.

On the road by which we return from Ormuz to Kirman you meet with some very fine plains, and you also find many natural hot baths; you find plenty of partridges on the road; and there are towns where victual is cheap and abundant, with quantities of dates and other fruits. The wheaten bread, however, is so bitter, owing to the bitterness of the water, that no one can eat it who is not used to it. The baths that I mentioned have excellent virtues; they cure the itch and several other diseases.

Now, then, I am going to tell you about the countries towards the north, of which you shall hear in regular order. Let us begin.

CHAPTER XX

Of the Wearisome and Desert Road that has now to be travelled

On departing from the city of Kirman you find the road for seven days most wearisome; and I will tell you how this is. The first three days you meet with no water, or next to none. And what little you do meet with is bitter green stuff, so salt that no one can drink it; and in fact if you drink a drop of it, it will set you purging ten times at least by the way. It is the same with the salt which is made from those streams; no one dares to make use of it, because of the excessive purging which it occasions. Hence it is necessary to carry water for the people to last these three days; as for the cattle, they must needs drink of the bad water I have mentioned, as there is no help for it, and their great thirst makes them do so. But it scours them to such a degree that sometimes they die of it. In all those three days you meet with no human

habitation; it is all desert, and the extremity of drought. Even of wild beasts there are none, for there is nothing for them to eat.

After those three days of desert [you arrive at a stream of fresh water running underground, but along which there are holes broken in here and there, perhaps undermined by the stream, at which you can get sight of it. It has an abundant supply, and travellers, worn with the hardships of the desert, here rest and refresh themselves and their beasts.]

You then enter another desert which extends for four days; it is very much like the former except that you do see some wild asses. And at the termination of these four days of desert the kingdom of Kirman comes to an end, and you find another city which is called Kubenan.

CHAPTER XXI

Concerning the City of Kubenan and the things that are made there

Kubenan is a large town. The people worship Mahommet. There is much Iron and Steel and *Ondanique*, and they make steel mirrors of great size and beauty. They also prepare both *Tutia* (a thing very good for the eyes) and *Spodium;* and I will tell you the process.

They have a vein of a certain earth which has the required quality, and this they put into a great flaming furnace, whilst over the furnace there is an iron grating. The smoke and moisture, expelled from the earth of which I speak, adhere to the iron grating, and thus form *Tutia*, whilst the slag that is left after burning is the *Spodium.*

CHAPTER XXII

Of a certain Desert that continues for eight days' Journey

When you depart from this City of Kubenan, you find yourself again in a Desert of surpassing aridity, which lasts for some eight days; here are neither fruits nor trees to be seen, and what water there is is bitter and bad, so that you have to carry both food and water. The cattle must needs drink the bad water, will they nill they, because of their great thirst. At the end of those eight days you arrive at a Province which is called Tunokain. It has a good many towns and villages, and forms the extremity of Persia towards the North. It also contains an immense plain on which is found the Arbre Sol, which we Christians call the *Arbre Sec;* and I will tell you what it is like. It is a tall and thick tree, having the bark on one side green and the other white; and it produces a rough husk like that of a chestnut, but without anything in it. The wood is yellow like box, and very strong, and there are no other trees near it nor within a hundred miles of it, except on one side, where you find trees within about ten miles' distance. And there, the people of the country tell you, was fought the battle between Alexander and King Darius.

The towns and villages have great abundance of everything good, for the climate is extremely temperate, being neither very hot nor very cold. The natives all worship Mahommet, and are a very fine-looking people, especially the women, who are surpassingly beautiful.

CHAPTER XXIII

Concerning the Old Man of the Mountain

Mulehet is a country in which the Old Man of the Mountain dwelt in former days; and the name means "*Place of the Aram.*" I will tell you his whole history as related by Messer Marco Polo, who heard it from several natives of that region.

The Old Man was called in their language Aladdin. He had caused a certain valley between two mountains to be enclosed, and had turned it into a garden, the largest and most beautiful that ever was seen, filled with every variety of fruit. In it were erected pavilions and palaces the most elegant that can be imagined, all covered with gilding and exquisite painting. And there were runnels too, flowing freely with wine and milk and honey and water; and numbers of ladies and of the most beautiful damsels in the world, who could play on all manner of instruments, and sung most sweetly, and danced in a manner that it was charming to behold. For the Old Man desired to make his people believe that this was actually Paradise. So he had fashioned it after the description that Mahommet gave of his Paradise, to wit, that it should be a beautiful garden running with conduits of wine and milk and honey and water, and full of lovely women for the delectation of all its inmates. And sure enough the Saracens of those parts believed that it *was* Paradise!

Now no man was allowed to enter the Garden save those whom he intended to be his Assassins. There was a Fortress at the entrance to the Garden, strong enough to resist all the world, and there was no other way to get in. He kept at his Court a number of the youths of the country, from 12 to 20 years of age, such as had a taste for soldiering, and to these he used to tell tales about Paradise, just as Mahommet had been wont

to do, and they believed in him just as the Saracens believed in Mahommet. Then he would introduce them into his garden, some four, or six, or ten at a time, having first made them drink a certain potion which cast them into a deep sleep, and then causing them to be lifted and carried in. So when they awoke, they found themselves in the Garden.

CHAPTER XXIV

How the Old Man used to train his Assassins

When therefore they awoke, and found themselves in a place so charming, they deemed that it was Paradise in very truth. And the ladies and damsels dallied with them to their hearts' content, so that they had what young men would have; and with their own good will they never would have quitted the place.

Now this Prince whom we call the Old One kept his Court in grand and noble style, and made those simple hill-folks about him believe firmly that he was a great Prophet. And when he wanted one of his *Assassins* to send on any mission, he would cause that potion whereof I spoke to be given to one of the youths in the garden, and then had him carried into his Palace. So when the young man awoke, he found himself in the Castle, and no longer in that Paradise; whereat he was not over well pleased. He was then conducted to the Old Man's presence, and bowed before him with great veneration as believing himself to be in the presence of a true Prophet. The Prince would then ask whence he came, and he would reply that he came from Paradise! and that it was exactly such as Mahommet had described it in the Law. This of course gave the others who stood by, and who had not been admitted, the greatest desire to enter therein.

So when the Old Man would have any Prince slain, he would say to such a youth: "Go thou and slay So

and So; and when thou returnest my Angels shall bear thee into Paradise. And shouldst thou die, natheless even so will I send my Angels to carry thee back into Paradise." So he caused them to believe; and thus there was no order of his that they would not affront any peril to execute, for the great desire they had to get back into that Paradise of his. And in this manner the Old One got his people to murder any one whom he desired to get rid of. Thus, too, the great dread that he inspired all Princes withal, made them become his tributaries in order that he might abide at peace and amity with them.

I should also tell you that the Old Man had certain others under him, who copied his proceedings and acted exactly in the same manner. One of these was sent into the territory of Damascus, and the other into Kurdistan.

CHAPTER XXV

How the Old Man came by His End

Now it came to pass, in the year of Christ's Incarnation, 1252, that Hulagu, Lord of the Tartars of the Levant, heard tell of these great crimes of the Old Man, and resolved to make an end of him. So he took and sent one of his Barons with a great Army to that Castle, and they besieged it for three years, but they could not take it, so strong was it. And indeed if they had had food within it never would have been taken. But after being besieged those three years they ran short of victual, and were taken. The Old Man was put to death with all his men [and the Castle with its Garden of Paradise was levelled with the ground]. And since that time he has had no successor; and there was an end to all his villainies.

Now let us go back to our journey.

CHAPTER XXVI

Concerning the City of Shibrgan

On leaving the Castle, you ride over fine plains and beautiful valleys, and pretty hill-sides producing excellent grass pasture, and abundance of fruits, and all other products. Armies are glad to take up their quarters here on account of the plenty that exists. This kind of country extends for six days' journey, with a goodly number of towns and villages, in which the people are worshippers of Mahommet. Sometimes also you meet with a tract of desert extending for 50 or 60 miles, or somewhat less, and in these deserts you find no water, but have to carry it along with you. The beasts do without drink until you have got across the desert tract and come to watering places.

So after travelling for six days as I have told you, you come to a city called Shibrgan. It has great plenty of everything, but especially of the very best melons in the world. They preserve them by paring them round and round into strips, and drying them in the sun. When dry they are sweeter than honey, and are carried off for sale all over the country. There is also abundance of game here, both of birds and beasts.

CHAPTER XXVII

Of the City of Balkh

Balkh is a noble city and a great, though it was much greater in former days. But the Tartars and other nations have greatly ravaged and destroyed it. There were formerly many fine palaces and buildings of marble, and the ruins of them still remain. The people of the city tell that it was here that Alexander took to wife the daughter of Darius.

Here, you should be told, is the end of the empire of the Tartar Lord of the Levant. And this city is also the limit of Persia in the direction between east and north-east.

Now, let us quit this city, and I will tell you of another country called Dogana.

When you have quitted the city of which I have been speaking, you ride some 12 days between north-east and east, without finding any human habitation, for the people have all taken refuge in fastnesses among the mountains, on account of the Banditti and armies that harassed them. There is plenty of water on the road, and abundance of game; there are lions too. You can get no provisions on the road, and must carry with you all that you require for these 12 days.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Of Taican, and the Mountains of Salt. Also of the Province of Kishm

After those twelve days' journey you come to a fortified place called Taican, where there is a great corn market. It is a fine place, and the mountains that you see towards the south are all composed of salt. People from all the countries round, to some thirty days' journey, come to fetch this salt, which is the best in the world, and is so hard that it can only be broken with iron picks. 'Tis in such abundance that it would supply the whole world to the end of time. [Other mountains there grow almonds and pistachioes, which are exceedingly cheap.]

When you leave this town and ride three days further between north-east and east, you meet with many fine tracts full of vines and other fruits, and with a goodly number of habitations, and everything to be had very cheap. The people are worshippers of Mahommet, and are an evil and a murderous generation, whose great

delight is in the wine shop; for they have good wine (albeit it be boiled), and are great topers; in truth, they are constantly getting drunk. They wear nothing on the head but a cord some ten palms long twisted round it. They are excellent huntsmen, and take a great deal of game; in fact they wear nothing but the skins of the beasts they have taken in the chase, for they make of them both coats and shoes. Indeed, all of them are acquainted with the art of dressing skins for these purposes.

When you have ridden those three days, you find a town called Kishm, which is subject to a count. His other towns and villages are on the hills, but through this town there flows a river of some size. There are a great many porcupines hereabouts, and very large ones too. When hunted with dogs, several of them will get together and huddle close, shooting their quills at the dogs, which get many a serious wound thereby.

This town of Kishm is at the head of a very great province, which is also called Kishm. The people have a peculiar language. The peasants who keep cattle abide in the mountains, and have their dwellings in caves, which form fine and spacious houses for them, and are made with ease, as the hills are composed of earth.

After leaving the town of Kishm, you ride for three days without finding a single habitation, or anything to eat or drink, so that you have to carry with you everything that you require. At the end of those three days you reach a province called Badakshan, about which we shall now tell you.

CHAPTER XXIX

Of the Province of Badakshan

Badakshan is a Province inhabited by people who worship Mahommet, and have a peculiar language. It forms a very great kingdom, and the royalty is hereditary. All those of the royal blood are descended from King Alex-

ander and the daughter of King Darius, who was Lord of the vast Empire of Persia. And all these kings call themselves in the Saracen tongue ZULKARNAIN, which is as much as to say *Alexander;* and this out of regard for Alexander the Great.

It is in this province that those fine and valuable gems the Balas Rubies are found. They are got in certain rocks among the mountains, and in the search for them the people dig great caves underground, just as is done by miners for silver. There is but one special mountain that produces them, and it is called SHIGNAN. The stones are dug on the king's account, and no one else dares dig in that mountain on pain of forfeiture of life as well as goods; nor may any one carry the stones out of the kingdom. But the king amasses them all, and sends them to other kings when he has tribute to render, or when he desires to offer a friendly present; and such only as he pleases he causes to be sold. Thus he acts in order to keep the Balas at a high value; for if he were to allow everybody to dig, they would extract so many that the world would be glutted with them, and they would cease to bear any value. Hence it is that he allows so few to be taken out, and is so strict in the matter.

There is also in the same country another mountain, in which azure is found; 'tis the finest in the world, and is got in a vein like silver. There are also other mountains which contain a great amount of silver ore, so that the country is a very rich one; but it is also (it must be said) a very cold one. It produces numbers of excellent horses, remarkable for their speed. They are not shod at all, although constantly used in mountainous country, and on very bad roads. [They go at a great pace even down steep descents, where other horses neither would nor could do the like. And Messer Marco was told that not long ago they possessed in that province a breed of horses from the strain of Alexander's horse Bucephalus, all of which had from their birth a particular

mark on the forehead. This breed was entirely in the hands of an uncle of the king's; and in consequence of his refusing to let the king have any of them, the latter put him to death. The widow then, in despite, destroyed the whole breed, and it is now extinct.]

The mountains of this country also supply Saker falcons of excellent flight, and plenty of Lanners likewise. Beasts and birds for the chase there are in great abundance. Good wheat is grown, and also barley without husk. They have no olive oil, but make oil from sesamé, and also from walnuts.

[In the mountains there are vast numbers of sheep—400, 500, or 600 in a single flock, and all of them wild; and though many of them are taken, they never seem to get aught the scarcer.

Those mountains are so lofty that 'tis a hard day's work, from morning till evening, to get to the top of them. On getting up, you find an extensive plain, with great abundance of grass and trees, and copious springs of pure water running down through rocks and ravines. In those brooks are found trout and many other fish of dainty kinds; and the air in those regions is so pure, and residence there so healthful, that when the men who dwell below in the towns, and in the valleys and plains, find themselves attacked by any kind of fever or other ailment that may hap, they lose no time in going to the hills; and after abiding there two or three days, they quite recover their health through the excellence of that air. And Messer Marco said he had proved this by experience: for when in those parts he had been ill for about a year, but as soon as he was advised to visit that mountain, he did so and got well at once.]

In this kingdom there are many strait and perilous passes, so difficult to force that the people have no fear of invasion. Their towns and villages also are on lofty hills, and in very strong positions. They are excellent archers, and much given to the chase; indeed, most of them are

dependent for clothing on the skins of beasts, for stuffs are very dear among them. The great ladies, however, are arrayed in stuffs, and I will tell you the style of their dress! They all wear drawers made of cotton cloth, and into the making of these some will put 60, 80, or even 100 ells of stuff. This they do to make themselves look large in the hips, for the men of those parts think that to be a great beauty in a woman.

CHAPTER XXX

Of the Province of Pashai

You must know that ten days' journey to the south of Badakshan there is a Province called Pashai, the people of which have a peculiar language, and are Idolaters, of a brown complexion. They are great adepts in sorceries and the diabolic arts. The men wear earrings and brooches of gold and silver set with stones and pearls. They are a pestilent people and a crafty; and they live upon flesh and rice. Their country is very hot.

Now let us proceed and speak of another country which is seven days' journey from this one towards the south-east, and the name of which is Kashmir.

CHAPTER XXXI

Of the Province of Kashmir

Kashmir also is a Province inhabited by a people who are Idolaters and have a language of their own. They have an astonishing acquaintance with the devilries of enchantment; insomuch that they make their idols to speak. They can also by their sorceries bring on changes of weather and produce darkness, and do a number of things so extraordinary that no one without seeing them

would believe them. Indeed, this country is the very original source from which Idolatry has spread abroad.

In this direction you can proceed further till you come to the Sea of India.

The men are brown and lean, but the women, taking them as brunettes, are very beautiful. The food of the people is flesh, and milk, and rice. The clime is finely tempered, being neither very hot nor very cold. There are numbers of towns and villages in the country, but also forests and desert tracts, and strong passes, so that the people have no fear of anybody, and keep their independence, with a king of their own to rule and do justice.

There are in this country Hermits (after the fashion of those parts), who dwell in seclusion and practise great abstinence in eating and drinking. They observe strict chastity, and keep from all sins forbidden in their law, so that they are regarded by their own folk as very holy persons. They live to a very great age.

There are also a number of idolatrous abbeys and monasteries. [The people of the province do not kill animals nor spill blood; so if they want to eat meat they get the Saracens who dwell among them to play the butcher.] The coral which is carried from our parts of the world has a better sale there than in any other country.

Now we will quit this country, and not go any further in the same direction; for if we did so we should enter India; and that I do not wish to do at present. For, on our return journey, I mean to tell you about India: all in regular order. Let us go back therefore to Badakshan, for we cannot otherwise proceed on our journey.

CHAPTER XXXII

Of the Great River of Badakshan

In leaving Badakshan you ride twelve days between east and north-east, ascending a river that runs through land belonging to a brother of the Prince of Badakshan, and containing a good many towns and villages and scattered habitations. The people are Mahommetans, and valiant in war. At the end of those twelve days you come to a province of no great size, extending indeed no more than three days' journey in any direction, and this is called Wakhan. The people worship Mahommet, and they have a peculiar language. They are gallant soldiers, and they have a chief whom they call Nono, which is as much as to say *Count*, and they are liegemen to the Prince of Badakshan.

There are numbers of wild beasts of all sorts in this region. And when you leave this little country, and ride three days north-east, always among mountains, you get to such a height that 'tis said to be the highest place in the world! And when you have got to this height you find [a great lake between two mountains, and out of it] a fine river running through a plain clothed with the finest pasture in the world; insomuch that a lean beast there will fatten to your heart's content in ten days. There are great numbers of all kinds of wild beasts; among others, wild sheep of great size, whose horns are good six palms in length. From these horns the shepherds make great bowls to eat from, and they use the horns also to enclose folds for their cattle at night. [Messer Marco was told also that the wolves were numerous, and killed many of those wild sheep. Hence quantities of their horns and bones were found, and these were made into great heaps by the way-side, in order to guide travellers when snow was on the ground.]

The plain is called Pamier, and you ride across it for

twelve days together, finding nothing but a desert without habitations or any green thing, so that travellers are obliged to carry with them whatever they have need of. The region is so lofty and cold that you do not even see any birds flying. And I must notice also that because of this great cold, fire does not burn so brightly, nor give out so much heat as usual, nor does it cook food so effectually.

Now, if we go on with our journey towards the east-north-east, we travel a good forty days, continually passing over mountains and hills, or through valleys, and crossing many rivers and tracts of wilderness. And in all this way you find neither habitation of man, nor any green thing, but must carry with you whatever you require. The country is called Bolor. The people dwell high up in the mountains, and are savage Idolaters, living only by the chase, and clothing themselves in the skins of beasts. They are in truth an evil race.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Of the Kingdom of Kashgar

Kashgar is a region lying between north-east and east, and constituted a kingdom in former days, but now it is subject to the Great Khan. The people worship Mahommet. There are a good number of towns and villages, but the greatest and finest is Kashgar itself. The inhabitants live by trade and handicrafts; they have beautiful gardens and vineyards, and fine estates, and grow a great deal of cotton. From this country many merchants go forth about the world on trading journeys. The natives are a wretched, niggardly set of people; they eat and drink in miserable fashion. There are in the country many Nestorian Christians, who have churches of their own. The people of the country have a peculiar language, and the territory extends for five days' journey.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Of the Great City of Samarkand

Samarkand is a great and noble city towards the north-west, inhabited by both Christians and Saracens, who are subject to the Great Khan's nephew, Kaidu by name; he is, however, at bitter enmity with the Khan. I will tell you of a great marvel that happened at this city.

It is not a great while ago that Jagatai, own brother to the Great Khan, who was Lord of this country and of many an one besides, became a Christian. The Christians rejoiced greatly at this, and they built a great church in the city, in honour of John the Baptist; and by his name the church was called. And they took a very fine stone which belonged to the Saracens, and placed it as the pedestal of a column in the middle of the church, supporting the roof. It came to pass, however, that Jagatai died. Now the Saracens were full of rancour about that stone that had been theirs, and which had been set up in the church of the Christians; and when they saw that the Prince was dead, they said one to another that now was the time to get back their stone, by fair means or by foul. And that they might well do, for they were ten times as many as the Christians. So they gat together and went to the church and said that the stone they must and would have. The Christians acknowledged that it was theirs indeed, but offered to pay a large sum of money and so be quit. Howbeit, the others replied that they never would give up the stone for anything in the world. And words ran so high that the Prince heard thereof, and ordered the Christians either to arrange to satisfy the Saracens, if it might be, with money, or to give up the stone. And he allowed them three days to do either the one thing or the other.

What shall I tell you? Well, the Saracens would on no account agree to leave the stone where it was, and this out of pure despite to the Christians, for they knew well enough that if the stone were stirred the church would come down by the run. So the Christians were in great trouble and wist not what to do. But they did do the best thing possible; they besought Jesus Christ that he would consider their case, so that the holy church should not come to destruction, nor the name of its Patron Saint, John the Baptist, be tarnished by its ruin. And so when the day fixed by the Prince came round, they went to the church betimes in the morning, and lo, they found the stone removed from under the column; the foot of the column was without support, and yet it bore the load as stoutly as before! Between the foot of the column and the ground there was a space of three palms. So the Saracens had away their stone, and mighty little joy withal. It was a glorious miracle, nay, it *is* so, for the column still so standeth, and will stand as long as God pleaseth.

Now let us quit this and continue our journey.

CHAPTER XXXV

Of the Province of Yarkand

Yarkand is a province five days' journey in extent. The people follow the Law of Mahommet, but there are also Nestorian and Jacobite Christians. They are subject to the same Prince that I mentioned, the Great Khan's nephew. They have plenty of everything, [particularly of cotton. The inhabitants are also great craftsmen, but a large proportion of them have swoln legs, and great crops at the throat, which arises from some quality in their drinking-water.] As there is nothing else worth telling we may pass on.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Of a Province called Khotan

Khotan is a province lying between north-east and east, and is eight days' journey in length. The people are subject to the Great Khan, and are all worshippers of Mahommet. There are numerous towns and villages in the country, but Khotan, the capital, is the most noble of all, and gives its name to the kingdom. Everything is to be had there in plenty, including abundance of cotton, [with flax, hemp, wheat, wine, and the like]. The people have vineyards and gardens and estates. They live by commerce and manufactures, and are no soldiers.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the Province of Pem

Pem is a province five days in length, lying between east and north-east. The people are worshippers of Mahommet, and subjects of the Great Khan. There are a good number of towns and villages, but the most noble is Pem, the capital of the kingdom. There are rivers in this country, in which quantities of Jasper and Chalcedony are found. The people have plenty of all products, including cotton. They live by manufactures and trade. But they have a custom that I must relate. If the husband of any woman go away upon a journey and remain away for more than 20 days, as soon as that term is past the woman may marry another man, and the husband also may then marry whom he pleases.

I should tell you that all the provinces that I have been speaking of, from Kashgar forward, and those I am going to mention [as far as the city of Lop] belong to Great Turkey.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Of the Province of Cherchen

Cherchen is a Province of Great Turkey, lying between north-east and east. The people worship Mahommet. There are numerous towns and villages, and the chief city of the kingdom bears its name, Cherchen. The Province contains rivers which bring down Jasper and Chalcedony, and these are carried for sale into Cathay, where they fetch great prices. The whole of the Province is sandy, and so is the road all the way from Pem, and much of the water that you find is bitter and bad. However, at some places you do find fresh and sweet water. When an army passes through the land, the people escape with their wives, children, and cattle a distance of two or three days' journey into the sandy waste; and knowing the spots where water is to be had, they are able to live there, and to keep their cattle alive, whilst it is impossible to discover them; for the wind immediately blows the sand over their track.

Quitting Cherchen, you ride some five days through the sands, finding none but bad and bitter water, and then you come to a place where the water is sweet. And now I will tell you of a province called Lop, in which there is a city, also called Lop, which you come to at the end of those five days. It is at the entrance of the great Desert, and it is here that travellers repose before entering on the Desert.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Of the City of Lop and the Great Desert

Lop is a large town at the edge of the Desert, which is called the Desert of Lop, and is situated between east and north-east. It belongs to the Great Khan, and the people worship Mahommet. Now, such persons as

propose to cross the Desert take a week's rest in this town to refresh themselves and their cattle; and then they make ready for the journey, taking with them a month's supply for man and beast. On quitting this city they enter the Desert.

The length of this Desert is so great that 'tis said it would take a year and more to ride from one end of it to the other. And here, where its breadth is least, it takes a month to cross it. 'Tis all composed of hills and valleys of sand, and not a thing to eat is to be found on it. But after riding for a day and a night you find fresh water, enough mayhap for some 50 or 100 persons with their beasts, but not for more. And all across the Desert you will find water in like manner, that is to say, in some 28 places altogether you will find good water, but in no great quantity; and in four places also you find brackish water.

Beasts there are none; for there is nought for them to eat. But there is a marvellous thing related of this Desert, which is that when travellers are on the move by night, and one of them chances to lag behind or to fall asleep or the like, when he tries to gain his company again he will hear spirits talking, and will suppose them to be his comrades. Sometimes the spirits will call him by name; and thus shall a traveller ofttimes be led astray so that he never finds his party. And in this way many have perished. [Sometimes the stray travellers will hear as it were the tramp and hum of a great cavalcade of people away from the real line of road, and taking this to be their own company they will follow the sound; and when day breaks they find that a cheat has been put on them and that they are in an ill plight.] Even in the day-time one hears those spirits talking. And sometimes you shall hear the sound of a variety of musical instruments, and still more commonly the sound of drums. [Hence in making this journey 'tis customary for travellers to keep close together. All the animals too

have bells at their necks, so that they cannot easily get astray. And at sleeping-time a signal is put up to show the direction of the next march.]

So thus it is that the Desert is crossed.

CHAPTER XL

Concerning the Great Province of Tangut

After you have travelled thirty days through the Desert, as I have described, you come to a city called Sha-chau, lying between north-east and east; it belongs to the Great Khan, and is in a province called Tangut. The people are for the most part Idolaters, but there are also some Nestorian Christians and some Saracens. The Idolaters have a peculiar language, and are no traders, but live by their agriculture. They have a great many abbeys and minsters full of idols of sundry fashions, to which they pay great honour and reverence, worshipping them and sacrificing to them with much ado. For example, such as have children will feed up a sheep in honour of the idol, and at the New Year, or on the day of the Idol's Feast, they will take their children and the sheep along with them into the presence of the idol with great ceremony. Then they will have the sheep slaughtered and cooked, and again present it before the idol with like reverence, and leave it there before him, whilst they are reciting the offices of their worship and their prayers for the idol's blessing on their children. And, if you will believe them, the idol feeds on the meat that is set before it! After these ceremonies they take up the flesh and carry it home, and call together all their kindred to eat it with them in great festivity [the idol-priests receiving for their portion the head, feet, entrails, and skin, with some part of the meat]. After they have eaten, they collect the bones that are left and store them carefully in a hutch.

And you must know that all the Idolaters in the world burn their dead. And when they are going to carry a body to the burning, the kinsfolk build a wooden house on the way to the spot, and drape it with cloths of silk and gold. When the body is going past this building they call a halt and set before it wine and meat and other eatables; and this they do with the assurance that the defunct will be received with the like attentions in the other world. All the minstrelsy in the town goes playing before the body; and when it reaches the burning-place the kinsfolk are prepared with figures cut out of parchment and paper in the shape of men and horses and camels, and also with round pieces of paper like gold coins, and all these they burn along with the corpse. For they say that in the other world the defunct will be provided with slaves and cattle and money, just in proportion to the amount of such pieces of paper that has been burnt along with him.

But they never burn their dead until they have [sent for the astrologers, and told them the year, the day, and the hour of the deceased person's birth, and when the astrologers have ascertained under what constellation, planet, and sign he was born, they declare the day on which, by the rules of their art, he ought to be burnt]. And till that day arrive they keep the body, so that 'tis sometimes a matter of six months, more or less, before it comes to be burnt.

Now the way they keep the body in the house is this: They make a coffin first of a good span in thickness, very carefully joined and daintily painted. This they fill up with camphor and spices, to keep off corruption [stopping the joints with pitch and lime], and then they cover it with a fine cloth. Every day as long as the body is kept, they set a table before the dead covered with food; and they will have it that the soul comes and eats and drinks: wherefore they leave the food there as long as would be necessary in order that one should

partake. Thus they do daily. And worse still! Sometimes those soothsayers shall tell them that 'tis not good luck to carry out the corpse by the door, so they have to break a hole in the wall, and to draw it out that way when it is taken to the burning. And these, I assure you, are the practices of all the Idolaters of those countries.

However, we will quit this subject, and I will tell you of another city which lies towards the north-west at the extremity of the desert.

CHAPTER XLI

Of the Province of Khamil

Khamil is a province which in former days was a kingdom. It contains numerous towns and villages, but the chief city bears the name of Khamil. The province lies between the two deserts, for on the one side is the Great Desert of Lop, and on the other side is a small desert of three days' journey in extent. The people are all Idolaters, and have a peculiar language. They live by the fruits of the earth, which they have in plenty, and dispose of to travellers. They are a people who take things very easily, for they mind nothing but playing and singing, and dancing and enjoying themselves.

And it is the truth that if a foreigner comes to the house of one of these people to lodge, the host is delighted, and desires his wife to put herself entirely at the guest's disposal, whilst he himself gets out of the way, and comes back no more until the stranger shall have taken his departure. The guest may stay and enjoy the wife's society as long as he lists, whilst the husband has no shame in the matter, but indeed considers it an honour. And all the men of this province are made wittols of by their wives in this way. The women themselves are fair and wanton.

Now it came to pass during the reign of Mangu Khan,

that as lord of this province he came to hear of this custom, and he sent forth an order commanding them under grievous penalties to do so no more [but to provide public hostelries for travellers]. And when they heard this order they were much vexed thereat. [For about three years' space they carried it out. But then they found that their lands were no longer fruitful, and that many mishaps befell them.] So they collected together and prepared a grand present which they sent to their Lord, praying him graciously to let them retain the custom which they had inherited from their ancestors; for it was by reason of this usage that their gods bestowed upon them all the good things that they possessed, and without it they saw not how they could continue to exist. When the Prince had heard their petition his reply was "Since ye must needs keep your shame, keep it then," and so he left them at liberty to maintain their naughty custom. And they always have kept it up, and do so still.

Now let us quit KHAMIL, and I will tell you of another province which lies between north-west and north, and belongs to the Great Khan.

CHAPTER XLII

OF THE PROVINCE OF CHINGINTALAS

CHINGINTALAS is also a province at the verge of the Desert, and lying between north-west and north. It has an extent of sixteen days' journey, and belongs to the Great Khan, and contains numerous towns and villages. There are three different races of people in it—Idolaters, Saracens, and some Nestorian Christians. At the northern extremity of this province there is a mountain in which are excellent veins of steel and ondanique. And you must know that in the same mountain there is a vein of the substance from which Salamander is made.

For the real truth is that the Salamander is no beast, as they allege in our part of the world, but is a substance found in the earth; and I will tell you about it.

Everybody must be aware that it can be no animal's nature to live in fire, seeing that every animal is composed of all the four elements. Now I, Marco Polo, had a Turkish acquaintance of the name of Zurficar, and he was a very clever fellow. And this Turk related to Messer Marco Polo how he had lived three years in that region on behalf of the Great Khan, in order to procure those Salamanders for him. He said that the way they got them was by digging in that mountain till they found a certain vein. The substance of this vein was then taken and crushed, and when so treated it divides as it were into fibres of wool, which they set forth to dry. When dry, these fibres were pounded in a great copper mortar, and then washed, so as to remove all the earth and to leave only the fibres like fibres of wool. These were then spun, and made into napkins. When first made these napkins are not very white, but by putting them into the fire for a while they come out as white as snow. And so again whenever they become dirty they are bleached by being put in the fire.

Now this, and nought else, is the truth about the Salamander, and the people of the country all say the same. Any other account of the matter is fabulous nonsense. And I may add that they have at Rome a napkin of this stuff, which the Grand Khan sent to the Pope to make a wrapper for the Holy Sudarium of Jesus Christ.

We will now quit this subject, and I will proceed with my account of the countries lying in the direction between north-east and east.

CHAPTER XLIII

Of the Province of Su-chau

On leaving the province of which I spoke before, you ride ten days between north-east and east, and in all that way you find no human dwelling, or next to none, so that there is nothing for our book to speak of.

At the end of those ten days you come to another province called Su-chau, in which there are numerous towns and villages. The chief city is called Su-chau. The people are partly Christians and partly Idolaters, and all are subject to the Great Khan.

The great General Province to which all these three provinces belong is called Tangut.

Over all the mountains of this province rhubarb is found in great abundance, and thither merchants come to buy it, and carry it thence all over the world. [Travellers, however, dare not visit those mountains with any cattle but those of the country, for a certain plant grows there which is so poisonous that cattle which eat it lose their hoofs. The cattle of the country know it and eschew it.] The people live by agriculture, and have not much trade. [They are of a brown complexion. The whole of the province is healthy.]

CHAPTER XLIV

Of the City of Kan-chu

Kan-chu is also a city of Tangut, and a very great and noble one. Indeed it is the capital and place of government of the whole province of Tangut. The people are Idolaters, Saracens, and Christians, and the latter have three very fine churches in the city, whilst the Idolaters have many minsters and abbeys after their fashion. In these they have an enormous number of idols, both

small and great, certain of the latter being a good ten paces in stature; some of them being of wood, others of clay, and others yet of stone. They are all highly polished, and then covered with gold. The great idols of which I speak lie at length. And round about them there are other figures of considerable size, as if adoring and paying homage before them.

Now, as I have not yet given you particulars about the customs of these Idolaters, I will proceed to tell you about them.

You must know that there are among them certain religious recluses who lead a more virtuous life than the rest. These abstain from all lechery, though they do not indeed regard it as a deadly sin; howbeit if any one sin against nature they condemn him to death. They have an Ecclesiastical Calendar as we have; and there are five days in the month that they observe particularly; and on these five days they would on no account either slaughter any animal or eat flesh meat. On those days, moreover, they observe much greater abstinence altogether than on other days.

Among these people a man may take thirty wives, more or less, if he can but afford to do so, each having wives in proportion to his wealth and means; but the first wife is always held in highest consideration. The men endow their wives with cattle, slaves, and money, according to their ability. And if a man dislikes any one of his wives, he just turns her off and takes another. They take to wife their cousins and their fathers' widows (always excepting the man's own mother), holding to be no sin many things that we think grievous sins, and, in short, they live like beasts.

Messer Maffeo and Messer Marco Polo dwelt a whole year in this city when on a mission.

Now we will leave this and tell you about other provinces towards the north, for we are going to take you a sixty days' journey in that direction.

CHAPTER XLV

Of the City of Etzina

When you leave the city of Kan-chu you ride for twelve days, and then reach a city called Etzina, which is towards the north on the verge of the Sandy Desert; it belongs to the Province of Tangut. The people are Idolaters, and possess plenty of camels and cattle, and the country produces a number of good falcons, both Sakers and Lanners. The inhabitants live by their cultivation and their cattle, for they have no trade. At this city you must needs lay in victuals for forty days, because when you quit Etzina, you enter on a desert which extends forty days' journey to the north, and on which you meet with no habitation nor baiting-place. In the summer-time, indeed, you will fall in with people, but in the winter the cold is too great. You also meet with wild beasts (for there are some small pine-woods here and there), and with numbers of wild asses. When you have travelled these forty days across the Desert you come to a certain province lying to the north. Its name you shall hear presently.

CHAPTER XLVI

Of the City of Karakorum

Karakorum is a city of some three miles in compass. [It is surrounded by a strong earthen rampart, for stone is scarce there. And beside it there is a great citadel wherein is a fine palace in which the Governor resides.] 'Tis the first city that the Tartars possessed after they issued from their own country. And now I will tell you all about how they first acquired dominion and spread over the world.

Originally the Tartars dwelt in the north on the borders

of Manchuria. Their country was one of great plains; and there were no towns or villages in it, but excellent pasture-lands, with great rivers and many sheets of water; in fact it was a very fine and extensive region. But there was no sovereign in the land. They did, however, pay tax and tribute to a great prince who was called in their tongue Ung Khan, the same that we call Prester John, him in fact about whose great dominion all the world talks. The tribute he had of them was one beast out of every ten, and also a tithe of all their other gear.

Now it came to pass that the Tartars multiplied exceedingly. And when Prester John saw how great a people they had become, he began to fear that he should have trouble from them. So he made a scheme to distribute them over sundry countries, and sent one of his Barons to carry this out. When the Tartars became aware of this they took it much amiss, and with one consent they left their country and went off across a desert to a distant region towards the north, where Prester John could not get at them to annoy them. Thus they revolted from his authority and paid him tribute no longer. And so things continued for a time.

CHAPTER XLVII

Of Jengis, and how he became the First Khan of the Tartars

Now it came to pass in the year of Christ's Incarnation 1187 that the Tartars made them a King whose name was Jengis Khan. He was a man of great worth, and of great ability (eloquence), and valour. And as soon as the news that he had been chosen King was spread abroad through those countries, all the Tartars in the world came to him and owned him for their Lord. And right well did he maintain the Sovereignty they had

given him. What shall I say? The Tartars gathered to him in astonishing multitude, and when he saw such numbers he made a great furniture of spears and arrows and such other arms as they used, and set about the conquest of all those regions till he had conquered eight provinces. When he conquered a province he did no harm to the people or their property, but merely established some of his own men in the country along with a proportion of theirs, whilst he led the remainder to the conquest of other provinces. And when those whom he had conquered became aware how well and safely he protected them against all others, and how they suffered no ill at his hands, and saw what a noble prince he was, then they joined him heart and soul and became his devoted followers. And when he had thus gathered such a multitude that they seemed to cover the earth, he began to think of conquering a great part of the world. Now in the year of Christ 1200 he sent an embassy to Prester John, and desired to have his daughter to wife. But when Prester John heard that JENGIS KHAN demanded his daughter in marriage he waxed very wroth, and said to the Envoys, "What impudence is this, to ask my daughter to wife! Wist he not well that he was my liegeman and serf? Get ye back to him and tell him that I had liever set my daughter in the fire than give her in marriage to him, and that he deserves death at my hand, rebel and traitor that he is!" So he bade the Envoys begone at once, and never come into his presence again. The Envoys, on receiving this reply, departed straightway, and made haste to their master, and related all that Prester John had ordered them to say, keeping nothing back.

CHAPTER XLVIII

How Jengis mustered his People to march against Prester John

When Jengis Khan heard the brutal message that Prester John had sent him, such rage seized him that his heart came nigh to bursting within him, for he was a man of a very lofty spirit. At last he spoke, and that so loud that all who were present could hear him: "Never more might he be prince if he took not revenge for the brutal message of Prester John, and such revenge that insult never in this world was so dearly paid for. And before long Prester John should know whether he were his serf or no!"

So then he mustered all his forces, and levied such a host as never before was seen or heard of, sending word to Prester John to be on his defence. And when Prester John had sure tidings that Jengis was really coming against him with such a multitude, he still professed to treat it as a jest and a trifle, for, quoth he, "these be no soldiers." Natheless he marshalled his forces and mustered his people, and made great preparations, in order that if Jengis did come, he might take him and put him to death. In fact he marshalled such an host of many different nations that it was a world's wonder.

And so both sides gat them ready to battle. And why should I make a long story of it? Jengis Khan with all his host arrived at a vast and beautiful plain which was called Tenduc, belonging to Prester John, and there he pitched his camp; and so great was the multitude of his people that it was impossible to number them. And when he got tidings that Prester John was coming, he rejoiced greatly, for the place afforded a fine and ample battle-ground, so he was right glad to tarry for him there, and greatly longed for his arrival.

But now leave we Jengis and his host, and let us return to Prester John and his people.

CHAPTER XLIX

How Prester John marched to meet Jengis

Now the story goes that when Prester John became aware that Jengis with his host was marching against him, he went forth to meet him with all his forces, and advanced until he reached the same plain of Tenduc, and pitched his camp over against that of Jengis Khan at a distance of 20 miles. And then both armies remained at rest for two days that they might be fresher and heartier for battle.

So when the two great hosts were pitched on the plains of Tenduc as you have heard, Jengis Khan one day summoned before him his astrologers, both Christians and Saracens, and desired them to let him know which of the two hosts would gain the battle, his own or Prester John's. The Saracens tried to ascertain, but were unable to give a true answer; the Christians, however, did give a true answer, and showed manifestly beforehand how the event should be. For they got a cane and split it lengthwise, and laid one half on this side and one half on that, allowing no one to touch the pieces. And one piece of cane they called *Jengis Khan*, and the other piece they called *Prester John*. And then they said to Jengis: "Now mark! and you will see the event of the battle, and who shall have the best of it; for whose cane soever shall get above the other, to him shall victory be." He replied that he would fain see it, and bade them begin. Then the Christian astrologers read a Psalm out of the Psalter, and went through other incantations. And lo! whilst all were beholding, the cane that bore the name of Jengis Khan, without being touched by anybody, advanced to the other that bore the name of Prester John, and got on the top of it. When the Prince saw that he was greatly delighted, and seeing how in this matter he found the Christians to tell the truth, he always treated them with great respect, and held them for men of truth for ever after.

CHAPTER L

The Battle between Jengis Khan and Prester John

And after both sides had rested well those two days, they armed for the fight and engaged in desperate combat; and it was the greatest battle that ever was seen. The numbers that were slain on both sides were very great, but in the end Jengis Khan obtained the victory. And in the battle Prester John was slain. And from that time forward, day by day, his kingdom passed into the hands of Jengis Khan till the whole was conquered.

I may tell you that Jengis Khan reigned six years after this battle, engaged continually in conquest, and taking many a province and city and stronghold. But at the end of those six years he went against a certain castle that was called Ho-chau, and there he was shot with an arrow in the knee, so that he died of his wound. A great pity it was, for he was a valiant man and a wise.

I will now tell you who reigned after Jengis, and then about the manners and customs of the Tartars.

CHAPTER LI

Of those who did Reign after Jengis Khan, and of the Customs of the Tartars

Now the next that reigned after Jengis Khan, their first Lord, was Kuyuk Khan, and the third Prince was Batu Khan, and the fourth was Hulagu Khan, the fifth Mangu Khan, the sixth Kublai Khan, who is the sovereign now reigning, and is more potent than any of the five who went before him; in fact, if you were to take all those five together, they would not be so powerful as he is. Nay, I will say yet more; for if you were to put together all the Christians in the world, with their Emperors and their Kings, the whole of these Christians,—

aye, and throw in the Saracens to boot,—would not have such power, or be able to do so much as this Kublai, who is the Lord of all the Tartars in the world, those of the Levant and of the Ponent included; for these are all his liegemen and subjects. I mean to show you all about this great power of his in this book of ours.

You should be told also that all the Grand Khans, and all the descendants of Jengis their first Lord, are carried to a mountain that is called ALTAY to be interred. Wheresoever the Sovereign may die, he is carried to his burial in that mountain with his predecessors; no matter if the place of his death were 100 days' journey distant, thither must he be carried to his burial.

Let me tell you a strange thing too. When they are carrying the body of any Emperor to be buried with the others, the convoy that goes with the body doth put to the sword all whom they fall in with on the road, saying: "Go and wait upon your Lord in the other world!" For they do in sooth believe that all such as they slay in this manner do go to serve their Lord in the other world. They do the same too with horses; for when the Emperor dies, they kill all his best horses, in order that he may have the use of them in the other world, as they believe. And I tell you as a certain truth, that when Mangu Khan died, more than 20,000 persons, who chanced to meet the body on its way, were slain in the manner I have told.

CHAPTER LII

CONCERNING THE CUSTOMS OF THE TARTARS

Now that we have begun to speak of the Tartars, I have plenty to tell you on that subject. The Tartar custom is to spend the winter in warm plains, where they find good pasture for their cattle, whilst in summer they betake themselves to a cool climate among the

mountains and valleys, where water is to be found as well as woods and pastures.

Their houses are circular, and are made of wands covered with felts. These are carried along with them whithersoever they go; for the wands are so strongly bound together, and likewise so well combined, that the frame can be made very light. Whenever they erect these huts the door is always to the south. They also have waggons covered with black felt so efficaciously that no rain can get in. These are drawn by oxen and camels, and the women and children travel in them. The women do the buying and selling, and whatever is necessary to provide for the husband and household; for the men all lead the life of gentlemen, troubling themselves about nothing but hunting and hawking, and looking after their goshawks and falcons, unless it be the practice of warlike exercises.

They live on the milk and meat which their herds supply, and on the produce of the chase; and they eat all kinds of flesh, including that of horses and dogs, and Pharaoh's rats, of which last there are great numbers in burrows on those plains. Their drink is mare's milk.

They are very careful not to meddle with each other's wives, and will not do so on any account, holding that to be an evil and abominable thing. The women too are very good and loyal to their husbands, and notable housewives withal. [Ten or twenty of them will dwell together in charming peace and unity, nor shall you ever hear an ill word among them.]

The marriage customs of Tartars are as follows. Any man may take a hundred wives an he so please, and if he be able to keep them. But the first wife is ever held most in honour, and as the most legitimate [and the same applies to the sons whom she may bear]. The husband gives a marriage payment to his wife's mother, and the wife brings nothing to her husband. They have more children than other people, because they have so

many wives. They may marry their cousins, and if a father dies, his son may take any of the wives, his own mother always excepted; that is to say the eldest son may do this, but no other. A man may also take the wife of his own brother after the latter's death. Their weddings are celebrated with great ado.

CHAPTER LIII

Concerning the God of the Tartars

This is the fashion of their religion. [They say there is a Most High God of Heaven, whom they worship daily with thurible and incense, but they pray to Him only for health of mind and body. But] they have [also] a certain [other] god of theirs called Natigay, and they say he is the god of the Earth, who watches over their children, cattle, and crops. They show him great worship and honour, and every man hath a figure of him in his house, made of felt and cloth; and they also make in the same manner images of his wife and children. The wife they put on the left hand, and the children in front. And when they eat, they take the fat of the meat and grease the god's mouth withal, as well as the mouths of his wife and children. Then they take of the broth and sprinkle it before the door of the house; and that done, they deem that their god and his family have had their share of the dinner.

Their drink is mare's milk, prepared in such a way that you would take it for white wine; and a right good drink it is, called by them *Kumiz*.

The clothes of the wealthy Tartars are for the most part of gold and silk stuffs, lined with costly furs, such as sable and ermine, vair and fox-skin, in the richest fashion.

CHAPTER LIV

Concerning the Tartar Customs of War

All their harness of war is excellent and costly. Their arms are bows and arrows, sword and mace; but above all the bow, for they are capital archers, indeed the best that are known. On their backs they wear armour of cuirbouly, prepared from buffalo and other hides, which is very strong. They are excellent soldiers, and passing valiant in battle. They are also more capable of hardships than other nations; for many a time, if need be, they will go for a month without any supply of food, living only on the milk of their mares and on such game as their bows may win them. Their horses also will subsist entirely on the grass of the plains, so that there is no need to carry store of barley or straw or oats; and they are very docile to their riders. These, in case of need, will abide on horseback the livelong night, armed at all points, while the horse will be continually grazing.

Of all troops in the world these are they which endure the greatest hardship and fatigue, and which cost the least; and they are the best of all for making wide conquests of country. And this you will perceive from what you have heard and shall hear in this book; and (as a fact) there can be no manner of doubt that now they are the masters of the biggest half of the world. Their troops are admirably ordered in the manner that I shall now relate.

You see, when a Tartar prince goes forth to war, he takes with him, say, 100,000 horse. Well, he appoints an officer to every ten men, one to every hundred, one to every thousand, and one to every ten thousand, so that his own orders have to be given to ten persons only, and each of these ten persons has to pass the orders only to other ten, and so on; no one having to give orders to more than ten. And every one in turn is responsible

only to the officer immediately over him; and the discipline and order that comes of this method is marvellous, for they are a people very obedient to their chiefs. Further, they call the corps of 100,000 men a *Tuc;* that of 10,000 they call a *Toman;* the thousand they call . . . . ; the hundred *Guz;* the ten. . . . And when the army is on the march they have always 200 horsemen, very well mounted, who are sent a distance of two marches in advance to reconnoitre, and these always keep ahead. They have a similar party detached in the rear, and on either flank, so that there is a good look-out kept on all sides against a surprise. When they are going on a distant expedition they take no gear with them except two leather bottles for milk; a little earthenware pot to cook their meat in, and a little tent to shelter them from rain. And in case of great urgency they will ride ten days on end without lighting a fire or taking a meal. On such an occasion they will sustain themselves on the blood of their horses, opening a vein and letting the blood jet into their mouths, drinking till they have had enough, and then staunching it.

They also have milk dried into a kind of paste to carry with them; and when they need food they put this in water, and beat it up till it dissolves, and then drink it. [It is prepared in this way; they boil the milk, and when the rich part floats on the top they skim it into another vessel, and of that they make butter; for the milk will not become solid till this is removed. Then they put the milk in the sun to dry. And when they go on an expedition, every man takes some ten pounds of this dried milk with him. And of a morning he will take a half pound of it and put it in his leather bottle, with as much water as he pleases. So, as he rides along, the milk-paste and the water in the bottle get well churned together into a kind of pap, and that makes his dinner.]

When they come to an engagement with the enemy, they will gain the victory in this fashion. [They never

let themselves get into a regular medley, but keep perpetually riding round and shooting into the enemy. And] as they do not count it any shame to run away in battle, they will [sometimes pretend to] do so, and in running away they turn in the saddle and shoot hard and strong at the foe, and in this way make great havoc. Their horses are trained so perfectly that they will double hither and thither, just like a dog, in a way that is quite astonishing. Thus they fight to as good purpose in running away as if they stood and faced the enemy, because of the vast volleys of arrows that they shoot in this way, turning round upon their pursuers, who are fancying that they have won the battle. But when the Tartars see that they have killed and wounded a good many horses and men, they wheel round bodily, and return to the charge in perfect order and with loud cries: and in a very short time the enemy are routed. In truth they are stout and valiant soldiers, and inured to war. And you perceive that it is just when the enemy sees them run, and imagines that he has gained the battle, that he has in reality lost it; for the Tartars wheel round in a moment when they judge the right time has come. And after this fashion they have won many a fight.

All this that I have been telling you is true of the manners and customs of the genuine Tartars. But I must add also that in these days they are greatly degenerated; for those who are settled in Cathay have taken up the practices of the Idolaters of the country, and have abandoned their own institutions; whilst those who have settled in the Levant have adopted the customs of the Saracens.

CHAPTER LV

Concerning the administering of Justice among the Tartars

The way they administer justice is this. When any one has committed a petty theft, they give him, under the orders of authority, seven blows of a stick, or seventeen, or twenty-seven, or thirty-seven, or forty-seven, and so forth, always increasing by tens in proportion to the injury done, and running up to one hundred and seven. Of these beatings sometimes they die. But if the offence be horse-stealing, or some other great matter, they cut the thief in two with a sword. Howbeit, if he be able to ransom himself by paying nine times the value of the thing stolen, he is let off. Every Lord or other person who possesses beasts has them marked with his peculiar brand, be they horses, mares, camels, oxen, cows, or other great cattle, and then they are sent abroad to graze over the plains without any keeper. They get all mixt together, but eventually every beast is recovered by means of its owner's brand, which is known. For their sheep and goats they have shepherds. All their cattle are remarkably fine, big, and in good condition.

They have another notable custom, which is this. If any man have a daughter who dies before marriage, and another man have had a son also die before marriage, the parents of the two arrange a grand wedding between the dead lad and lass. And marry them they do, making a regular contract! And when the contract papers are made out they put them in the fire, in order (as they will have it) that the parties in the other world may know the fact, and so look on each other as man and wife. And the parents thenceforward consider themselves sib to each other, just as if their children had lived and married. Whatever may be agreed on between

the parties as dowry, those who have to pay it cause to be painted on pieces of paper and then put these in the fire, saying that in that way the dead person will get all the real articles in the other world.

Now I have told you all about the manners and customs of the Tartars; but you have heard nothing yet of the great state of the Grand Khan, who is the Lord of all the Tartars and of the Supreme Imperial Court. All that I will tell you in this book in proper time and place, but meanwhile I must return to my story which I left off in that great plain when we began to speak of the Tartars.

CHAPTER LVI

Sundry Particulars of the Plain beyond Karakorum

And when you leave Karakorum and the Altay, in which they bury the bodies of the Tartar Sovereigns, as I told you, you go north for forty days till you reach a country called the Plain of Bargu. The people there are called Mekrit; they are a very wild race, and live by their cattle, the most of which are stags, and these stags, I assure you, they used to ride upon. Their customs are like those of the Tartars, and they are subject to the Great Khan. They have neither corn nor wine. [They get birds for food, for the country is full of lakes and pools and marshes, which are much frequented by the birds when they are moulting, and when they have quite cast their feathers and can't fly, those people catch them. They also live partly on fish.]

And when you have travelled forty days over this great plain you come to the ocean, at the place where the mountains are in which the Peregrine falcons have their nests. And in those mountains it is so cold that you find neither man nor woman, nor beast nor bird, except one kind of bird called *Barguerlac*, on which the

falcons feed. They are as big as partridges, and have feet like those of parrots and a tail like a swallow's, and are very strong in flight. And when the Grand Khan wants Peregrines from the nest, he sends thither to procure them. It is also on islands in that sea that the Gerfalcons are bred. You must know that the place is so far to the north that you leave the North Star somewhat behind you towards the south! The gerfalcons are so abundant there that the Emperor can have as many as he likes to send for. And you must not suppose that those gerfalcons which the Christians carry into the Tartar dominions go to the Great Khan; they are carried only to the Prince of the Levant.

Now I have told you all about the provinces northward as far as the Ocean Sea, beyond which there is no more land at all; so I shall proceed to tell you of the other provinces on the way to the Great Khan. Let us, then, return to that province of which I spoke before, called Kan-chau.

CHAPTER LVII

Of the Kingdom of Erguiul, and Province of Si-ning-fu

On leaving Kan-chau, then, you travel five days across a tract in which many spirits are heard speaking in the night season; and at the end of those five marches, towards the east, you come to a kingdom called Erguiul, belonging to the Great Khan. It is one of the several kingdoms which make up the great Province of Tangut. The people consist of Nestorian Christians, Idolaters, and worshippers of Mahommet.

There are plenty of cities in this kingdom, but the capital is Erguiul. You can travel in a south-easterly direction from this place into the province of Cathay. Should you follow that road to the south-east, you come to a city called Si-ning-fu, belonging also to Tangut,

and subject to the Great Khan, which has under it many towns and villages. The population is composed of Idolaters, and worshippers of Mahommet, but there are some Christians also. There are wild cattle in that country [almost] as big as elephants, splendid creatures, covered everywhere but on the back with shaggy hair a good four palms long. They are partly black, partly white, and really wonderfully fine creatures [and the hair or wool is extremely fine and white, finer and whiter than silk. Messer Marco brought some to Venice as a great curiosity, and so it was reckoned by those who saw it]. There are also plenty of them tame, which have been caught young. [They also cross these with the common cow, and the cattle from this cross are wonderful beasts, and better for work than other animals.] These the people use commonly for burden and general work, and in the plough as well; and at the latter they will do full twice as much work as any other cattle, being such very strong beasts.

In this country too is found the best musk in the world; and I will tell you how 'tis produced. There exists in that region a kind of wild animal like a gazelle. It has feet and tail like the gazelle's, and stag's hair of a very coarse kind, but no horns. It has four tusks, two below and two above, about three inches long, and slender in form, one pair growing upwards, and the other downwards. It is a very pretty creature. The musk is found in this way. When the creature has been taken, they find at the navel between the flesh and the skin something like an impostume full of blood, which they cut out and remove with all the skin attached to it. And the blood inside this impostume is the musk that produces that powerful perfume. There is an immense number of these beasts in the country we are speaking of. [The flesh is very good to eat. Messer Marco brought the dried head and feet of one of these animals to Venice with him.]

The people are traders and artizans, and also grow abundance of corn. The province has an extent of 26 days' journey. Pheasants are found there twice as big as ours, indeed nearly as big as a peacock, and having tails of 7 to 10 palms in length; and besides them other pheasants in aspect like our own, and birds of many other kinds, and of beautiful variegated plumage. The people, who are Idolaters, are fat folks with little noses and black hair, and no beard, except a few hairs on the upper lip. The women too have very smooth and white skins, and in every respect are pretty creatures. The men are very sensual, and marry many wives, which is not forbidden by their religion. No matter how base a woman's descent may be, if she have beauty she may find a husband among the greatest men in the land, the man paying the girl's father and mother a great sum of money, according to the bargain that may be made.

CHAPTER LVIII

Of the Kingdom of Egrigaia

Starting again from Erguiul you ride eastward for eight days, and then come to a province called Egrigaia, containing numerous cities and villages, and belonging to Tangut. The capital city is called Calachan. The people are chiefly Idolaters, but there are fine churches belonging to the Nestorian Christians. They are all subjects of the Great Khan. They make in this city great quantities of camlets of camel's wool, the finest in the world; and some of the camlets that they make are white, for they have white camels, and these are the best of all. Merchants purchase these stuffs here, and carry them over the world for sale.

We shall now proceed eastward from this place and enter the territory that was formerly Prester John's.

CHAPTER LIX

Concerning the Province of Tenduc, and the Descendants of Prester John

Tenduc is a province which lies towards the east, and contains numerous towns and villages; among which is the chief city, also called Tenduc. The king of the province is of the lineage of Prester John, George by name, and he holds the land under the Great Khan; not that he holds anything like the whole of what Prester John possessed. It is a custom, I may tell you, that these kings of the lineage of Prester John always obtain to wife either daughters of the Great Khan or other princesses of his family.

In this province is found the stone from which Azure is made. It is obtained from a kind of vein in the earth, and is of very fine quality. There is also a great manufacture of fine camlets of different colours from camel's hair. The people get their living by their cattle and tillage, as well as by trade and handicraft.

The rule of the province is in the hands of the Christians, as I have told you; but there are also plenty of Idolaters and worshippers of Mahommet. And there is also here a class of people called *Argons*, which is as much as to say in French *Guasmul*, or, in other words, sprung from two different races: to wit, of the race of the Idolaters of Tenduc and of that of the worshippers of Mahommet. They are handsomer men than the other natives of the country, and having more ability, they come to have authority; and they are also capital merchants.

You must know that it was in this same capital city of Tenduc that Prester John had the seat of his government when he ruled over the Tartars, and his heirs still abide there; for, as I have told you, this King George is of his line, in fact, he is the sixth in descent from Prester John.

Here also is what *we* call the country of Gog and

Magog; *they*, however, call it Ung and Mungul, after the names of two races of people that existed in that Province before the migration of the Tartars. *Ung* was the title of the people of the country, and *Mungul* a name sometimes applied to the Tartars.

And when you have ridden seven days eastward through this province you get near the provinces of Cathay. You find throughout those seven days' journey plenty of towns and villages, the inhabitants of which are Mahommetans, but with a mixture also of Idolaters and Nestorian Christians. They get their living by trade and manufactures; weaving those fine cloths of gold which are called *Nasich* and *Naques*, besides silk stuffs of many other kinds. For just as we have cloths of wool in our country, manufactured in a great variety of kinds, so in those regions they have stuffs of silk and gold in like variety.

All this region is subject to the Great Khan. There is a city you come to called Suen-te-chau, where they carry on a great many crafts such as provide for the equipment of the Emperor's troops. In a mountain of the province there is a very good silver mine, from which much silver is got: the place is called Ydifu. The country is well stocked with game, both beast and bird.

Now we will quit that province and go three days' journey forward.

CHAPTER LX

Concerning the Khan's Palace of Chagannor

At the end of those three days you find a city called Chagannor [which is as much as to say White Lake], at which there is a great Palace of the Grand Khan's; and he likes much to reside there on account of the Lakes and Rivers in the neighbourhood, which are the haunt of swans and of a great variety of other birds. The adjoining plains too abound with cranes, partridges,

pheasants, and other game birds, so that the Emperor takes all the more delight in staying there, in order to go a-hawking with his gerfalcons and other falcons, a sport of which he is very fond.

There are five different kinds of cranes found in those tracts, as I shall tell you. First, there is one which is very big, and all over as black as a crow; the second kind again is all white, and is the biggest of all; its wings are really beautiful, for they are adorned with round eyes like those of a peacock, but of a resplendent golden colour, whilst the head is red and black on a white ground. The third kind is the same as ours. The fourth is a small kind, having at the ears beautiful long pendent feathers of red and black. The fifth kind is grey all over and of great size, with a handsome head, red and black.

Near this city there is a valley in which the Emperor has had several little houses erected in which he keeps in mew a huge number of *cators*, which are what we call the Great Partridge. You would be astonished to see what a quantity there are, with men to take charge of them. So whenever the Khan visits the place he is furnished with as many as he wants.

CHAPTER LXI

Of the City of Shangtu, and the Khan's Palace there

And when you have ridden three days from the city last mentioned, between north-east and north, you come to a city called Shangtu, which was built by the Khan now reigning. There is at this place a very fine marble Palace, the rooms of which are all gilt and painted with figures of men and beasts and birds, and with a variety of trees and flowers, all executed with such exquisite art that you regard them with delight and astonishment.

Round this Palace a wall is built, inclosing a compass

of 16 miles, and inside the Park there are fountains and rivers and brooks, and beautiful meadows, with all kinds of wild animals (excluding such as are of ferocious nature), which the Emperor has procured and placed there to supply food for his gerfalcons and hawks, which he keeps there in mew. Of these there are more than 200 gerfalcons alone, without reckoning the other hawks. The Khan himself goes every week to see his birds sitting in mew, and sometimes he rides through the park with a leopard behind him on his horse's croup; and then if he sees any animal that takes his fancy, he slips his leopard at it, and the game when taken is made over to feed the hawks in mew. This he does for diversion.

Moreover [at a spot in the Park where there is a charming wood] he has another Palace built of cane, of which I must give you a description. It is gilt all over, and most elaborately finished inside. [It is stayed on gilt and lackered columns, on each of which is a dragon all gilt, the tail of which is attached to the column whilst the head supports the architrave, and the claws likewise are stretched out right and left to support the architrave.] The roof, like the rest, is formed of canes, covered with a varnish so strong and excellent that no amount of rain will rot them. These canes are a good 3 palms in girth, and from 10 to 15 paces in length. [They are cut across at each knot, and then the pieces are split so as to form from each two hollow tiles, and with these the house is roofed; only every such tile of cane has to be nailed down to prevent the wind from lifting it.] In short, the whole Palace is built of these canes, which (I may mention) serve also for a great variety of other useful purposes. The construction of the Palace is so devised that it can be taken down and put up again with great celerity; and it can all be taken to pieces and removed whithersoever the Emperor may command. When erected, it is braced [against mishaps from the wind] by more than 200 cords of silk.

The Lord abides at this Park of his, dwelling sometimes in the Marble Palace and sometimes in the Cane Palace for three months of the year, to wit, June, July, and August; preferring this residence because it is by no means hot; in fact it is a very cool place. When the 28th day of [the Moon of] August arrives he takes his departure, and the Cane Palace is taken to pieces. But I must tell you what happens when he goes away from this Palace every year on the 28th of the August [Moon].

You must know that the Khan keeps an immense stud of white horses and mares; in fact more than 10,000 of them, and all pure white without a speck. The milk of these mares is drunk by himself and his family, and by none else, except by those of one great tribe that have also the privilege of drinking it. This privilege was granted them by Jengis Khan, on account of a certain victory that they helped him to win long ago. The name of the tribe is Uirat.

Now when these mares are passing across the country, and any one falls in with them, be he the greatest lord in the land, he must not presume to pass until the mares have gone by; he must either tarry where he is, or go a half-day's journey round if need so be, so as not to come nigh them; for they are to be treated with the greatest respect. Well, when the Lord sets out from the Park on the 28th of August, as I told you, the milk of all those mares is taken and sprinkled on the ground. And this is done on the injunction of the Idolaters and Idol-priests, who say that it is an excellent thing to sprinkle that milk on the ground every 28th of August, so that the Earth and the Air and the False Gods shall have their share of it, and the Spirits likewise that inhabit the Air and the Earth. And thus those beings will protect and bless the Khan and his children and his wives and his folk and his gear, and his cattle and his horses, his corn and all that is his. After this is done, the Emperor is off and away.

But I must now tell you a strange thing that hitherto I have forgotten to mention. During the three months of every year that the Lord resides at that place, if it should happen to be bad weather, there are certain crafty enchanters and astrologers in his train, who are such adepts in necromancy and the diabolic arts, that they are able to prevent any cloud or storm from passing over the spot on which the Emperor's Palace stands. The sorcerers who do this are called TIBET and KASHMIR, which are the names of two nations of Idolaters. Whatever they do in this way is by the help of the Devil, but they make those people believe that it is compassed by dint of their own sanctity and the help of God. [They always go in a state of dirt and uncleanness, devoid of respect for themselves, or for those who see them, unwashed, unkempt, and sordidly attired.]

These people also have a custom which I must tell you. If a man is condemned to death and executed by the lawful authority, they take his body and cook and eat it. But if any one die a natural death then they will not eat the body.

There is another marvel performed by those BAKSHI, of whom I have been speaking as knowing so many enchantments. For when the Great Khan is at his capital and in his great Palace, seated at his table, which stands on a platform some eight cubits above the ground, his cups are set before him [on a great buffet] in the middle of the hall pavement, at a distance of some ten paces from his table, and filled with wine, or other good spiced liquor such as they use. Now when the Lord desires to drink, these enchanters by the power of their enchantments cause the cups to move from their place without being touched by anybody, and to present themselves to the Emperor! This every one present may witness, and there are ofttimes more than 10,000 persons thus present. 'Tis a truth and no lie! and so will tell you the sages of our own country who understand necromancy, for they also can perform it.

And when the Idol Festivals come round, these *Bakshi* go to the Prince and say: "Sire, the Feast of such a god is come" (naming him). "My Lord, you know," the enchanter will say, "that this god, when he gets no offerings, always sends bad weather and spoils our seasons. So we pray you to give us such and such a number of black-faced sheep," naming whatever number they please. "And we beg also, good my lord, that we may have such a quantity of incense, and such a quantity of lignaloes, and"—so much of this, so much of that, and so much of t'other, according to their fancy—"that we may perform a solemn service and a great sacrifice to our Idols, and that so they may be induced to protect us and all that is ours."

The *Bakshi* say these things to the Barons entrusted with the Stewardship, who stand round the Great Khan, and these repeat them to the Khan, and he then orders the Barons to give everything that the *Bakshi* have asked for. And when they have got the articles they go and make a great feast in honour of their god, and hold great ceremonies of worship with grand illuminations and quantities of incense of a variety of odours, which they make up from different aromatic spices. And then they cook the meat, and set it before the idols, and sprinkle the broth hither and thither, saying that in this way the idols get their bellyful. Thus it is that they keep their festivals. You must know that each of the idols has a name of his own, and a feast-day, just as our Saints have their anniversaries.

They have also immense Minsters and Abbeys, some of them as big as a small town, with more than two thousand monks (*i.e.* after their fashion) in a single abbey. These monks dress more decently than the rest of the people, and have the head and beard shaven. There are some among these *Bakshi* who are allowed by their rule to take wives, and who have plenty of children.

Then there is another kind of devotees called Sensin,

who are men of extraordinary abstinence after their fashion, and lead a life of such hardship as I will describe. All their life long they eat nothing but bran, which they take mixt with hot water. That is their food: bran, and nothing but bran; and water for their drink. 'Tis a lifelong fast! so that I may well say their life is one of extraordinary asceticism. They have great idols, and plenty of them; but they sometimes also worship fire. The other Idolaters who are not of this sect call these people heretics—*Patarins* as we should say—because they do not worship their idols in their own fashion. Those of whom I am speaking would not take a wife on any consideration. They wear dresses of hempen stuff, black and blue, and sleep upon mats; in fact their asceticism is something astonishing. Their idols are all female, that is to say, they have women's names.

Now let us have done with this subject, and let me tell you of the great state and wonderful magnificence of the Great Lord of Lords; I mean that great Prince who is the Sovereign of the Tartars, KUBLAI by name, that most noble and puissant Lord.

BOOK SECOND

(1.) ACCOUNT OF THE GREAT KHAN KUBLAI; OF HIS PALACES AND CAPITAL; HIS COURT, GOVERNMENT, AND SPORTS

(2.) CITIES AND PROVINCES VISITED BY THE TRAVELLER ON ONE JOURNEY WESTWARD FROM THE CAPITAL TO THE FRONTIERS OF MIEN IN THE DIRECTION OF INDIA

(3.) AND ON ANOTHER SOUTHWARD FROM THE CAPITAL TO FUCHU AND ZAYTON

BOOK II

Part I.—THE KHAN, HIS COURT AND CAPITAL

CHAPTER I

Of Kublai Khan, the Great Khan now Reigning, and of his Great Puissance

Now am I come to that part of our Book in which I shall tell you of the great and wonderful magnificence of the Great Khan now reigning, by name Kublai Khan; *Khan* being a title which signifyeth "The Great Lord of Lords," or Emperor. And of a surety he hath good right to such a title, for all men know for a certain truth that he is the most potent man, as regards forces and lands and treasure, that existeth in the world, or ever hath existed from the time of our First Father Adam until this day. All this I will make clear to you for truth, in this book of ours, so that every one shall be fain to acknowledge that he is the greatest Lord that is now in the world, or ever hath been. And now ye shall hear how and wherefore.

CHAPTER II

Concerning the Revolt of Nayan, who was Uncle to the Great Khan Kublai

Now this Kublai Khan is of the right Imperial lineage, being descended from Jengis Khan, the first sovereign of all the Tartars. And he is the sixth Lord in that succession, as I have already told you in this book. He came to the throne in the year of Christ 1256, and the Empire fell to him because of his ability and valour and great worth, as was right and reason. His brothers,

indeed, and other kinsmen disputed his claim, but his it remained, both because maintained by his great valour, and because it was in law and right his, as being directly sprung of the Imperial line.

Up to the year of Christ now running, to wit 1298, he hath reigned two-and-forty years, and his age is about eighty-five, so that he must have been about forty-three years of age when he first came to the throne. Before that time he had often been to the wars, and had shown himself a gallant soldier and an excellent captain. But after coming to the throne he never went to the wars in person save once. This befel in the year of Christ, 1286, and I will tell you why he went.

There was a great Tartar Chief, whose name was NAYAN, a young man [of thirty], Lord over many lands and many provinces; and he was Uncle to the Emperor Kublai Khan of whom we are speaking. And when he found himself in authority this Nayan waxed proud in the insolence of his youth and his great power; for indeed he could bring into the field 300,000 horsemen, though all the time he was liegeman to his nephew, the Great Khan Kublai, as was right and reason. Seeing then what great power he had, he took it into his head that he would be the Great Khan's vassal no longer; nay more, he would fain wrest his empire from him if he could. So this Nayan sent envoys to another Tartar Prince called KAIDU, also a great and potent Lord, who was a kinsman of his, and who was a nephew of the Great Khan and his lawful liegeman also, though he was in rebellion and at bitter enmity with his sovereign Lord and Uncle. Now the message that Nayan sent was this: That he himself was making ready to march against the Great Khan with all his forces (which were great), and he begged Kaidu to do likewise from his side, so that by attacking Kublai on two sides at once with such great forces they would be able to wrest his dominion from him.

And when Kaidu heard the message of Nayan, he was right glad thereat, and thought the time was come at last to gain his object. So he sent back answer that he would do as requested; and got ready his host, which mustered a good hundred thousand horsemen.

Now let us go back to the Great Khan, who had news of all this plot.

CHAPTER III

How the Great Khan marched against Nayan

When the Great Khan heard what was afoot, he made his preparations in right good heart, like one who feared not the issue of an attempt so contrary to justice. Confident in his own conduct and prowess, he was in no degree disturbed, but vowed that he would never wear crown again if he brought not those two traitorous and disloyal Tartar chiefs to an ill end. So swiftly and secretly were his preparations made, that no one knew of them but his Privy Council, and all were completed within ten or twelve days. In that time he had assembled good 360,000 horsemen, and 100,000 footmen, —but a small force indeed for him, and consisting only of those that were in the vicinity. For the rest of his vast and innumerable forces were too far off to answer so hasty a summons, being engaged under orders from him on distant expeditions to conquer divers countries and provinces.

[You must know that in all the Provinces of Cathay and Mangi, and throughout the Great Khan's dominions, there are too many disloyal folk ready to break into rebellion against their Lord, and hence it is needful in every province containing large cities and much population, to maintain garrisons. These are stationed four or five miles from the cities, and the latter are not allowed to have walls or gates by which they might obstruct the entrance of the troops at their pleasure. These

garrisons as well as their commanders the Great Khan causes to be relieved every two years; and bridled in this way the people are kept quiet, and can make no disturbance. The troops are maintained not only by the pay which the Khan regularly assigns from the revenues of each province, but also by the vast quantities of cattle which they keep, and by the sale of milk in the cities, which furnishes the means of buying what they require. They are scattered among their different stations, at distances of 30, 40, or 60 days (from the capital); and had Kublai decided to summon but the half of them, the number would have been incredible.]

If he had waited to summon all his troops, the multitude assembled would have been beyond all belief, a multitude such as never was heard of or told of, past all counting. In fact, those 360,000 horsemen that he got together consisted merely of the falconers and whippers-in that were about the court!

And when he had got ready this handful (as it were) of his troops, he ordered his astrologers to declare whether he should gain the battle and get the better of his enemies. After they had made their observations, they told him to go on boldly, for he would conquer and gain a glorious victory: whereat he greatly rejoiced.

So he marched with his army, and after advancing for 20 days they arrived at a great plain where Nayan lay with all his host, amounting to some 400,000 horse. Now the Great Khan's forces arrived so fast and so suddenly that the others knew nothing of the matter. For the Khan had caused such strict watch to be made in every direction for scouts that every one that appeared was instantly captured. Thus Nayan had no warning of his coming and was completely taken by surprise; insomuch that when the Great Khan's army came up, he was asleep in the arms of a wife of his of whom he was extravagantly fond. So thus you see why it was that the Emperor equipped his force with such speed and secrecy.

CHAPTER IV

Of the Battle that the Great Khan fought with Nayan

What shall I say about it? When day had well broken, there was the Khan with all his host upon a hill overlooking the plain where Nayan lay in his tent, in all security, without the slightest thought of any one coming thither to do him hurt. In fact, this confidence of his was such that he kept no vedettes whether in front or in rear; for he knew nothing of the coming of the Great Khan, owing to all the approaches having been completely occupied as I told you. Moreover, the place was in a remote wilderness, more than thirty marches from the Court, though the Khan had made the distance in twenty, so eager was he to come to battle with Nayan.

And what shall I tell you next? The Khan was there on the hill, mounted on a great wooden bartizan, which was borne by four well-trained elephants, and over him was hoisted his standard, so high aloft that it could be seen from all sides. His troops were ordered in battles of 30,000 men apiece; and a great part of the horsemen had each a foot soldier armed with a lance set on the crupper behind him (for it was thus that the footmen were disposed of); and the whole plain seemed to be covered with his forces. So it was thus that the Great Khan's army was arrayed for battle.

When Nayan and his people saw what had happened, they were sorely confounded, and rushed in haste to arms. Nevertheless they made them ready in good style and formed their troops in an orderly manner. And when all were in battle array on both sides as I have told you, and nothing remained but to fall to blows, then might you have heard a sound arise of many instruments of various music, and of the voices of the whole of the two hosts loudly singing. For this is a

custom of the Tartars, that before they join battle they all unite in singing and playing on a certain two-stringed instrument of theirs, a thing right pleasant to hear. And so they continue in their array of battle, singing and playing in this pleasing manner, until the great Naccara of the Prince is heard to sound. As soon as that begins to sound the fight also begins on both sides; and in no case before the Prince's Naccara sounds dare any commence fighting.

So then, as they were thus singing and playing, though ordered and ready for battle, the great Naccara of the Great Khan began to sound. And that of Nayan also began to sound. And thenceforward the din of battle began to be heard loudly from this side and from that. And they rushed to work so doughtily with their bows and their maces, with their lances and swords, and with the arblasts of the footmen, that it was a wondrous sight to see. Now might you behold such flights of arrows from this side and from that, that the whole heaven was canopied with them and they fell like rain. Now might you see on this side and on that full many a cavalier and man-at-arms fall slain, insomuch that the whole field seemed covered with them. From this side and from that such cries arose from the crowds of the wounded and dying that had God thundered, you would not have heard Him! For fierce and furious was the battle, and quarter there was none given.

But why should I make a long story of it? You must know that it was the most parlous and fierce and fearful battle that ever has been fought in our day. Nor have there ever been such forces in the field in actual fight, especially of horsemen, as were then engaged—for, taking both sides, there were not fewer than 760,000 horsemen, a mighty force! and that without reckoning the footmen, who were also very numerous. The battle endured with various fortune on this side and on that from morning till noon. But at the last, by God's pleasure

and the right that was on his side, the Great Khan had the victory, and Nayan lost the battle and was utterly routed. For the army of the Great Khan performed such feats of arms that Nayan and his host could stand against them no longer, so they turned and fled. But this availed nothing for Nayan; for he and all the barons with him were taken prisoners, and had to surrender to the Khan with all their arms.

Now you must know that Nayan was a baptized Christian, and bore the cross on his banner; but this nought availed him, seeing how grievously he had done amiss in rebelling against his Lord. For he was the Great Khan's liegeman, and was bound to hold his lands of him like all his ancestors before him.

CHAPTER V

How the Great Khan caused Nayan to be put to death

And when the Great Khan learned that Nayan was taken right glad was he, and commanded that he should be put to death straightway and in secret, lest endeavours should be made to obtain pity and pardon for him, because he was of the Khan's own flesh and blood. And this was the way in which he was put to death: he was wrapt in a carpet, and tossed to and fro so mercilessly that he died. And the Khan caused him to be put to death in this way because he would not have the blood of his Line Imperial spilt upon the ground or exposed in the eye of Heaven and before the Sun.

And when the Great Khan had gained this battle, as you have heard, all the Barons and people of Nayan's provinces renewed their fealty to the Khan. Now these provinces that had been under the Lordship of Nayan were four in number; to wit, the first called Churchin; the second Kaoli; the third Barscol; the fourth Sin-

CHINTINGIN. Of all these four great provinces had Nayan been Lord; it was a very great dominion.

And after the Great Khan had conquered Nayan, as you have heard, it came to pass that the different kinds of people who were present, Saracens and Idolaters and Jews, and many others that believed not in God, did gibe those that were Christians because of the cross that Nayan had borne on his standard, and that so grievously that there was no bearing it. Thus they would say to the Christians: "See now what precious help this God's Cross of yours hath rendered Nayan, who was a Christian and a worshipper thereof." And such a din arose about the matter that it reached the Great Khan's own ears. When it did so, he sharply rebuked those who cast these gibes at the Christians; and he also bade the Christians be of good heart, "for if the Cross had rendered no help to Nayan, in that It had done right well; nor could that which was good, as It was, have done otherwise; for Nayan was a disloyal and traitorous Rebel against his Lord, and well deserved that which had befallen him. Wherefore the Cross of your God did well in that It gave him no help against the right." And this he said so loud that everybody heard him. The Christians then replied to the Great Khan: "Great King, you say the truth indeed, for our Cross can render no one help in wrong-doing; and therefore it was that It aided not Nayan, who was guilty of crime and disloyalty, for It would take no part in his evil deeds."

And so thenceforward no more was heard of the floutings of the unbelievers against the Christians; for they heard very well what the Sovereign said to the latter about the Cross on Nayan's banner, and its giving him no help.

CHAPTER VI

How the Great Khan went back to the City of Cambaluc

And after the Great Khan had defeated Nayan in the way you have heard, he went back to his capital city of Cambaluc and abode there, taking his ease and making festivity. And the other Tartar Lord called Kaidu was greatly troubled when he heard of the defeat and death of Nayan, and held himself in readiness for war; but he stood greatly in fear of being handled as Nayan had been.

I told you that the Great Khan never went on a campaign but once, and it was on this occasion; in all other cases of need he sent his sons or his barons into the field. But this time he would have none go in command but himself, for he regarded the presumptuous rebellion of Nayan as far too serious and perilous an affair to be otherwise dealt with.

CHAPTER VII

How the Khan rewarded the Valour of his Captains

So we will have done with this matter of Nayan, and go on with our account of the great state of the Great Khan.

We have already told you of his lineage and of his age; but now I must tell you what he did after his return, in regard to those barons who had behaved well in the battle. Him who was before captain of 100 he made captain of 1000; and him who was captain of 1000 men he made to be captain of 10,000, advancing every man according to his deserts and to his previous rank. Besides that, he also made them presents of fine silver plate and other rich appointments; gave them Tablets

of Authority of a higher degree than they held before; and bestowed upon them fine jewels of gold and silver, and pearls and precious stones; insomuch that the amount that fell to each of them was something astonishing. And yet 'twas not so much as they had deserved; for never were men seen who did such feats of arms for the love and honour of their Lord, as these had done on that day of the battle.

Now those Tablets of Authority, of which I have spoken, are ordered in this way. The officer who is a captain of 100 hath a tablet of silver; the captain of 1000 hath a tablet of gold or silver-gilt; the commander of 10,000 hath a tablet of gold, with a lion's head on it. And I will tell you the weight of the different tablets, and what they denote. The tablets of the captains of 100 and 1000 weigh each of them 120 *saggi;* and the tablet with the lion's head engraven on it, which is that of the commander of 10,000, weighs 220 *saggi.* And on each of the tablets is inscribed a device, which runs: "*By the strength of the great God, and of the great grace which He hath accorded to our Emperor, may the name of the Khan be blessed; and let all such as will not obey him be slain and be destroyed.*" And I will tell you besides that all who hold these tablets likewise receive warrants in writing, declaring all their powers and privileges.

I should mention too that an officer who holds the chief command of 100,000 men, or who is general-in-chief of a great host, is entitled to a tablet that weighs 300 *saggi.* It has an inscription thereon to the same purport that I have told you already, and below the inscription there is the figure of a lion, and below the lion the sun and moon. They have warrants also of their high rank, command, and power. Every one, moreover, who holds a tablet of this exalted degree is entitled, whenever he goes abroad, to have a little golden canopy, such as is called an umbrella, carried on a spear

over his head in token of his high command. And whenever he sits, he sits in a silver chair.

To certain very great lords also there is given a tablet with gerfalcons on it; this is only to the very greatest of the Khan's barons, and it confers on them his own full power and authority; so that if one of those chiefs wishes to send a messenger any whither, he can seize the horses of any man, be he even a king, and any other chattels at his pleasure.

CHAPTER VIII

Concerning the Person of the Great Khan

The personal appearance of the Great Khan, Lord of Lords, whose name is Kublai, is such as I shall now tell you. He is of a good stature, neither tall nor short, but of a middle height. He has a becoming amount of flesh, and is very shapely in all his limbs. His complexion is white and red, the eyes black and fine, the nose well formed and well set on. He has four wives, whom he retains permanently as his legitimate consorts; and the eldest of his sons by those four wives ought by rights to be emperor;—I mean when his father dies. Those four ladies are called empresses, but each is distinguished also by her proper name. And each of them has a special court of her own, very grand and ample; no one of them having fewer than 300 fair and charming damsels. They have also many pages and eunuchs, and a number of other attendants of both sexes; so that each of these ladies has not less than 10,000 persons attached to her court.

When the Emperor desires the society of one of these four consorts, he will sometimes send for the lady to his apartment and sometimes visit her at her own. He has also a great number of concubines, and I will tell you how he obtains them.

You must know that there is a tribe of Tartars called

Kungurat, who are noted for their beauty. [The Great Khan sends his commissioners to the Province to select four or five hundred, or whatever number may be ordered, of the most beautiful young women, according to the scale of beauty enjoined upon them. And they set a value upon the comparative beauty of the damsels in this way. The commissioners on arriving assemble all the girls of the province, in presence of appraisers appointed for the purpose. These carefully survey the points of each girl in succession, as (for example) her hair, her complexion, eyebrows, mouth, lips, and the proportion of all her limbs. They will then set down some as estimated at 16 points, some at 17, 18, 20, or more or less, according to the sum of the beauties or defects of each. And whatever standard the Great Khan may have fixed for those that are to be brought to him, whether it be 20 points or 21, the commissioners select the required number from those who have attained that standard, and bring them to him. And when they reach his presence he has them appraised anew by other parties, and has a selection made of 30 or 40 of those, who then get the highest valuation.] Now every year an hundred of the most beautiful maidens of this tribe are sent to the Great Khan, who commits them to the charge of certain elderly ladies dwelling in his palace. And these old ladies make the girls sleep with them, in order to ascertain if they have sweet breath [and do not snore], and are sound in all their limbs. Then such of them as are of approved beauty, and are good and sound in all respects, are appointed to attend on the Emperor by turns. Thus six of these damsels take their turn for three days and nights, and wait on him when he is in his chamber and when he is in his bed, to serve him in any way, and to be entirely at his orders. At the end of the three days and nights they are relieved by other six. And so throughout the year, there are reliefs of maidens by six and six, changing every three days and nights.

CHAPTER IX

Concerning the Great Khan's Sons

The Emperor hath, by those four wives of his, twenty-two male children; the eldest of whom was called Chimkin for the love of the good Jengis Khan, the first Lord of the Tartars. And this Chimkin, as the Eldest Son of the Khan, was to have reigned after his father's death; but, as it came to pass, he died. He left a son behind him, however, whose name is Temur, and he is to be the Great Khan and Emperor after the death of his Grandfather, as is but right; he being the child of the Great Khan's eldest son. And this Temur is an able and brave man, as he hath already proven on many occasions.

The Great Kahn hath also twenty-five other sons by his concubines; and these are good and valiant soldiers, and each of them is a great chief. I tell you moreover that of his children by his four lawful wives there are seven who are kings of vast realms or provinces, and govern them well; being all able and gallant men, as might be expected. For the Great Khan their sire is, I tell you, the wisest and most accomplished man, the greatest Captain, the best to govern men and rule an Empire, as well as the most valiant, that ever has existed among all the Tribes of Tartars.

CHAPTER X

Concerning the Palace of the Great Khan

You must know that for three months of the year, to wit December, January, and February, the Great Khan resides in the capital city of Cathay, which is called Cambaluc, [and which is at the north-eastern extremity of the country]. In that city stands his great Palace, and now I will tell you what it is like.

It is enclosed all round by a great wall forming a square, each side of which is a mile in length; that is to say, the whole compass thereof is four miles. This you may depend on; it is also very thick, and a good ten paces in height, whitewashed and loop-holed all round. At each angle of the wall there is a very fine and rich palace in which the war-harness of the Emperor is kept, such as bows and quivers, saddles and bridles, and bowstrings, and everything needful for an army. Also midway between every two of these Corner Palaces there is another of the like; so that taking the whole compass of the enclosure you find eight vast Palaces stored with the Great Lord's harness of war. And you must understand that each Palace is assigned to only one kind of article; thus one is stored with bows, a second with saddles, a third with bridles, and so on in succession right round.

The great wall has five gates on its southern face, the middle one being the great gate which is never opened on any occasion except when the Great Khan himself goes forth or enters. Close on either side of this great gate is a smaller one by which all other people pass; and then towards each angle is another great gate, also open to people in general; so that on that side there are five gates in all.

Inside of this wall there is a second, enclosing a space that is somewhat greater in length than in breadth. This enclosure also has eight palaces corresponding to those of the outer wall, and stored like them with the Lord's harness of war. This wall also hath five gates on the southern face, corresponding to those in the outer wall, and hath one gate on each of the other faces, as the outer wall hath also. In the middle of the second enclosure is the Lord's Great Palace, and I will tell you what it is like.

You must know that it is the greatest Palace that ever was. [Towards the north it is in contact with the

outer wall, whilst towards the south there is a vacant space which the Barons and the soldiers are constantly traversing. The Palace itself] hath no upper story, but is all on the ground floor, only the basement is raised some ten palms above the surrounding soil [and this elevation is retained by a wall of marble raised to the level of the pavement, two paces in width and projecting beyond the base of the Palace so as to form a kind of terrace-walk, by which people can pass round the building, and which is exposed to view, whilst on the outer edge of the wall there is a very fine pillared balustrade; and up to this the people are allowed to come]. The roof is very lofty, and the walls of the Palace are all covered with gold and silver. They are also adorned with representations of dragons [sculptured and gilt], beasts and birds, knights and idols, and sundry other subjects. And on the ceiling too you see nothing but gold and silver and painting. [On each of the four sides there is a great marble staircase leading to the top of the marble wall, and forming the approach to the Palace.]

The Hall of the Palace is so large that it could easily dine 6000 people; and it is quite a marvel to see how many rooms there are besides. The building is altogether so vast, so rich, and so beautiful, that no man on earth could design anything superior to it. The outside of the roof also is all coloured with vermilion and yellow and green and blue and other hues, which are fixed with a varnish so fine and exquisite that they shine like crystal, and lend a resplendent lustre to the Palace as seen for a great way round. This roof is made too with such strength and solidity that it is fit to last for ever.

[On the interior side of the Palace are large buildings with halls and chambers, where the Emperor's private property is placed, such as his treasures of gold, silver, gems, pearls, and gold plate, and in which reside the ladies and concubines. There he occupies himself at his own convenience, and no one else has access.]

Between the two walls of the enclosure which I have described, there are fine parks and beautiful trees bearing a variety of fruits. There are beasts also of sundry kinds, such as white stags and fallow deer, gazelles and roebucks, and fine squirrels of various sorts, with numbers also of the animal that gives the musk, and all manner of other beautiful creatures, insomuch that the whole place is full of them, and no spot remains void except where there is traffic of people going and coming. [The parks are covered with abundant grass; and the roads through them being all paved and raised two cubits above the surface, they never become muddy, nor does the rain lodge on them, but flows off into the meadows, quickening the soil and producing that abundance of herbage.]

From that corner of the enclosure which is towards the north-west there extends a fine Lake, containing foison of fish of different kinds which the Emperor hath caused to be put in there, so that whenever he desires any he can have them at his pleasure. A river enters this lake and issues from it, but there is a grating of iron or brass put up so that the fish cannot escape in that way.

Moreover on the north side of the Palace, about a bow-shot off, there is a hill which has been made by art [from the earth dug out of the lake]; it is a good hundred paces in height and a mile in compass. This hill is entirely covered with trees that never lose their leaves, but remain ever green. And I assure you that wherever a beautiful tree may exist, and the Emperor gets news of it, he sends for it and has it transported bodily with all its roots and the earth attached to them, and planted on that hill of his. No matter how big the tree may be, he gets it carried by his elephants; and in this way he has got together the most beautiful collection of trees in all the world. And he has also caused the whole hill to be covered with the ore of azure, which is very green. And thus not only are the trees all green, but the hill itself

is all green likewise; and there is nothing to be seen on it that is not green; and hence it is called the GREEN MOUNT; and in good sooth 'tis named well.

On the top of the hill again there is a fine big palace which is all green inside and out; and thus the hill, and the trees, and the palace form together a charming spectacle; and it is marvellous to see their uniformity of colour! Everybody who sees them is delighted. And the Great Khan had caused this beautiful prospect to be formed for the comfort and solace and delectation of his heart.

You must know that beside the Palace (that we have been describing), *i.e.* the Great Palace, the Emperor has caused another to be built just like his own in every respect, and this he hath done for his son when he shall reign and be Emperor after him. Hence it is made just in the same fashion and of the same size, so that everything can be carried on in the same manner after his own death. [It stands on the other side of the lake from the Great Khan's Palace, and there is a bridge crossing the water from one to the other.] The Prince in question holds now a Seal of Empire, but not with such complete authority as the Great Khan, who remains supreme as long as he lives.

Now I am going to tell you of the chief city of Cathay, in which these Palaces stand; and why it was built, and how.

CHAPTER XI

CONCERNING THE CITY OF CAMBALUC

Now there was on that spot in old times a great and noble city called CAMBALUC, which is as much as to say in our tongue "The city of the Emperor." But the Great Khan was informed by his Astrologers that this city would prove rebellious, and raise great disorders against his imperial authority. So he caused the present

city to be built close beside the old one, with only a river between them. And he caused the people of the old city to be removed to the new town that he had founded; and this is called Taidu. [However, he allowed a portion of the people which he did not suspect to remain in the old city, because the new one could not hold the whole of them, big as it is.]

As regards the size of this (new) city you must know that it has a compass of 24 miles, for each side of it hath a length of 6 miles, and it is four-square. And it is all walled round with walls of earth which have a thickness of full ten paces at bottom, and a height of more than 10 paces; but they are not so thick at top, for they diminish in thickness as they rise, so that at top they are only about 3 paces thick. And they are provided throughout with loop-holed battlements, which are all whitewashed.

There are 12 gates, and over each gate there is a great and handsome palace, so that there are on each side of the square three gates and five palaces; for (I ought to mention) there is at each angle also a great and handsome palace. In those palaces are vast halls in which are kept the arms of the city garrison.

The streets are so straight and wide that you can see right along them from end to end and from one gate to the other. And up and down the city there are beautiful palaces, and many great and fine hostelries, and fine houses in great numbers. [All the plots of ground on which the houses of the city are built are four-square, and laid out with straight lines; all the plots being occupied by great and spacious palaces, with courts and gardens of proportionate size. All these plots were assigned to different heads of families. Each square plot is encompassed by handsome streets for traffic; and thus the whole city is arranged in squares just like a chessboard, and disposed in a manner so perfect and masterly that it is impossible to give a description that should do it justice.]

Moreover, in the middle of the city there is a great clock—that is to say, a bell—which is struck at night. And after it has struck three times no one must go out in the city, unless it be for the needs of a woman in labour, or of the sick. And those who go about on such errands are bound to carry lanterns with them. Moreover, the established guard at each gate of the city is 1000 armed men; not that you are to imagine this guard is kept up for fear of any attack, but only as a guard of honour for the Sovereign, who resides there, and to prevent thieves from doing mischief in the town.

CHAPTER XII

How the Great Khan Maintains a Guard of Twelve Thousand Horse, which are called Keshikten

You must know that the Great Khan, to maintain his state, hath a guard of twelve thousand horsemen, who are styled Keshikten, which is as much as to say "Knights devoted to their Lord." Not that he keeps these for fear of any man whatever, but merely because of his own exalted dignity. These 12,000 men have four captains, each of whom is in command of 3000; and each body of 3000 takes a turn of three days and nights to guard the palace, where they also take their meals. After the expiration of three days and nights they are relieved by another 3000, who mount guard for the same space of time, and then another body takes its turn, so that there are always 3000 on guard. Thus it goes until the whole 12,000, who are styled (as I said) Keshikten, have been on duty; and then the tour begins again, and so runs on from year's end to year's end.

CHAPTER XIII

The Fashion of the Great Khan's Table at his High Feasts

And when the Great Khan sits at table on any great court occasion, it is in this fashion. His table is elevated a good deal above the others, and he sits at the north end of the hall, looking towards the south, with his chief wife beside him on the left. On his right sit his sons and his nephews, and other kinsmen of the Blood Imperial, but lower, so that their heads are on a level with the Emperor's feet. And then the other Barons sit at other tables lower still. So also with the women; for all the wives of the Lord's sons, and of his nephews and other kinsmen, sit at the lower table to his right; and below them again the ladies of the other Barons and Knights, each in the place assigned by the Lord's orders. The tables are so disposed that the Emperor can see the whole of them from end to end, many as they are. [Further, you are not to suppose that everybody sits at table; on the contrary, the greater part of the soldiers and their officers sit at their meal in the hall on the carpets.] Outside the hall will be found more than 40,000 people; for there is a great concourse of folk bringing presents to the Lord, or come from foreign countries with curiosities.

In a certain part of the hall near where the Great Khan holds his table, there [is set a large and very beautiful piece of workmanship in the form of a square coffer, or buffet, about three paces each way, exquisitely wrought with figures of animals, finely carved and gilt. The middle is hollow, and in it] stands a great vessel of pure gold, holding as much as an ordinary butt; and at each corner of the great vessel is one of smaller size [of the capacity of a firkin], and from the former the wine or beverage flavoured with fine and costly spices is drawn off into the latter. [And on the buffet aforesaid are set

all the Lord's drinking vessels, among which are certain pitchers of the finest gold,] which are called *verniques*, and are big enough to hold drink for eight or ten persons. And one of these is put between every two persons, besides a couple of golden cups with handles, so that every man helps himself from the pitcher that stands between him and his neighbour. And the ladies are supplied in the same way. The value of these pitchers and cups is something immense; in fact, the Great Khan has such a quantity of this kind of plate, and of gold and silver in other shapes, as no one ever before saw or heard tell of, or could believe.

[There are certain Barons specially deputed to see that foreigners, who do not know the customs of the Court, are provided with places suited to their rank; and these Barons are continually moving to and fro in the hall, looking to the wants of the guests at table, and causing the servants to supply them promptly with wine, milk, meat, or whatever they lack. At every door of the hall (or, indeed, wherever the Emperor may be) there stand a couple of big men like giants, one on each side, armed with staves. Their business is to see that no one steps upon the threshold in entering, and if this does happen, they strip the offender of his clothes, and he must pay a forfeit to have them back again; or in lieu of taking his clothes, they give him a certain number of blows. If they are foreigners ignorant of the order, then there are Barons appointed to introduce them, and explain it to them. They think, in fact, that it brings bad luck if any one touches the threshold. Howbeit, they are not expected to stick at this in going forth again, for at that time some are like to be the worse for liquor, and incapable of looking to their steps.]

And you must know that those who wait upon the Great Khan with his dishes and his drink are some of the great Barons. They have the mouth and nose muffled with fine napkins of silk and gold, so that no breath nor

odour from their persons should taint the dish or the goblet presented to the Lord. And when the Emperor is going to drink, all the musical instruments, of which he has vast store of every kind, begin to play. And when he takes the cup all the Barons and the rest of the company drop on their knees and make the deepest obeisance before him, and then the Emperor doth drink. But each time that he does so the whole ceremony is repeated.

I will say nought about the dishes, as you may easily conceive that there is a great plenty of every possible kind. But you should know that in every case where a Baron or Knight dines at those tables, their wives also dine there with the other ladies. And when all have dined and the tables have been removed, then come in a great number of players and jugglers, adepts at all sorts of wonderful feats, and perform before the Emperor and the rest of the company, creating great diversion and mirth, so that everybody is full of laughter and enjoyment. And when the performance is over, the company breaks up and every one goes to his quarters.

CHAPTER XIV

Concerning the Great Feast held by the Grand Khan every Year on his Birthday

You must know that the Tartars keep high festival yearly on their birthdays. And the Great Khan was born on the 28th day of the September moon, so on that day is held the greatest feast of the year at the Khan's Court, always excepting that which he holds on New Year's Day, of which I shall tell you afterwards.

Now, on his birthday, the Great Khan dresses in the best of his robes, all wrought with beaten gold; and full 12,000 Barons and Knights on that day come forth dressed in robes of the same colour, and precisely like

those of the Great Khan, except that they are not so costly; but still they are all of the same colour as his, and are also of silk and gold. Every man so clothed has also a girdle of gold; and this as well as the dress is given him by the Sovereign. And I will aver that there are some of these suits decked with so many pearls and precious stones that a single suit shall be worth full 10,000 golden bezants.

And of such raiment there are several sets. For you must know that the Great Khan, thirteen times in the year, presents to his Barons and Knights such suits of raiment as I am speaking of. And on each occasion they wear the same colour that he does, a different colour being assigned to each festival. Hence you may see what a huge business it is, and that there is no prince in the world but he alone who could keep up such customs as these.

On his birthday also, all the Tartars in the world, and all the countries and governments that owe allegiance to the Khan, offer him great presents according to their several ability, and as prescription or orders have fixed the amount. And many other persons also come with great presents to the Khan, in order to beg for some employment from him. And the Great Khan has chosen twelve Barons on whom is laid the charge of assigning to each of these supplicants a suitable answer.

On this day likewise all the Idolaters, all the Saracens, and all the Christians and other descriptions of people make great and solemn devotions, with much chaunting and lighting of lamps and burning of incense, each to the God whom he doth worship, praying that He would save the Emperor, and grant him long life and health and happiness.

And thus, as I have related, is celebrated the joyous feast of the Khan's birthday.

Now I will tell you of another festival which the Khan holds at the New Year, and which is called the White Feast.

CHAPTER XV

Of the Great Festival which the Khan holds on New Year's Day

The beginning of their New Year is the month of February, and on that occasion the Great Khan and all his subjects made such a Feast as I now shall describe.

It is the custom that on this occasion the Khan and all his subjects should be clothed entirely in white; so, that day, everybody is in white, men and women, great and small. And this is done in order that they may thrive all through the year, for they deem that white clothing is lucky. On that day also all the people of all the provinces and governments and kingdoms and countries that own allegiance to the Khan bring him great presents of gold and silver, and pearls and gems, and rich textures of divers kinds. And this they do that the Emperor throughout the year may have abundance of treasure and enjoyment without care. And the people also make presents to each other of white things, and embrace and kiss and make merry, and wish each other happiness and good luck for the coming year. On that day, I can assure you, among the customary presents there shall be offered to the Khan from various quarters more than 100,000 white horses, beautiful animals, and richly caparisoned. [And you must know 'tis their custom in offering presents to the Great Khan (at least when the province making the present is able to do so), to present nine times nine articles. For instance, if a province sends horses, it sends nine times nine or 81 horses; of gold, nine times nine pieces of gold, and so with stuffs or whatever else the present may consist of.]

On that day also, the whole of the Khan's elephants, amounting fully to 5000 in number, are exhibited, all covered with rich and gay housings of inlaid cloth representing beasts and birds, whilst each of them carries on

his back two splendid coffers; all of these being filled with the Emperor's plate and other costly furniture required for the Court on the occasion of the White Feast. And these are followed by a vast number of camels which are likewise covered with rich housings and laden with things needful for the Feast. All these are paraded before the Emperor, and it makes the finest sight in the world.

Moreover, on the morning of the Feast, before the tables are set, all the Kings, and all the Dukes, Marquesses, Counts, Barons, Knights, and Astrologers, and Philosophers, and Leeches, and Falconers, and other officials of sundry kinds from all the places round about, present themselves in the Great Hall before the Emperor; whilst those who can find no room to enter stand outside in such a position that the Emperor can see them all well. And the whole company is marshalled in this wise. First are the Khan's sons, and his nephews, and the other Princes of the Blood Imperial; next to them all Kings; then Dukes, and then all others in succession according to the degree of each. And when they are all seated, each in his proper place, then a great prelate rises and says with a loud voice: "Bow and adore!" And as soon as he has said this, the company bow down until their foreheads touch the earth in adoration towards the Emperor as if he were a god. And this adoration they repeat four times, and then go to a highly decorated altar, on which is a vermilion tablet with the name of the Grand Khan inscribed thereon, and a beautiful censer of gold. So they incense the tablet and the altar with great reverence, and then return each man to his seat.

When all have performed this, then the presents are offered, of which I have spoken as being so rich and costly. And after all have been offered and been seen by the Emperor, the tables are set, and all take their places at them with perfect order as I have already told you. And after dinner the jugglers come in and amuse

the Court as you have heard before; and when that is over, every man goes to his quarters.

CHAPTER XVI

Concerning the Twelve Thousand Barons who receive robes of Cloth of Gold from the Emperor on the Great Festivals, thirteen changes apiece

Now you must know that the Great Khan hath set apart 12,000 of his men who are distinguished by the name of *Keshikten*, as I have told you before; and on each of these 12,000 Barons he bestows thirteen changes of raiment, which are all different from one another: I mean that in one set the 12,000 are all of one colour; the next 12,000 of another colour, and so on; so that they are of thirteen different colours. These robes are garnished with gems and pearls and other precious things in a very rich and costly manner. And along with each of these changes of raiment, *i.e.* 13 times in the year, he bestows on each of those 12,000 Barons a fine golden girdle of great richness and value, and likewise a pair of boots of *Camut*, that is to say of *Borgal*, curiously wrought with silver thread; insomuch that when they are clothed in these dresses every man of them looks like a king! And there is an established order as to which dress is to be worn at each of those thirteen feasts. The Emperor himself also has his thirteen suits corresponding to those of his Barons; in *colour*, I mean (though his are grander, richer, and costlier), so that he is always arrayed in the same colour as his Barons, who are, as it were, his comrades. And you may see that all this costs an amount which it is scarcely possible to calculate.

Now I have told you of the thirteen changes of raiment received from the Prince by those 12,000 Barons, amounting in all to 156,000 suits of so great cost and value, to

say nothing of the girdles and the boots which are also worth a great sum of money. All this the Great Lord hath ordered, that he may attach the more of grandeur and dignity to his festivals.

And now I must mention another thing that I had forgotten, but which you will be astonished to learn from this Book. You must know that on the Feast Day a great Lion is led to the Emperor's presence, and as soon as it sees him it lies down before him with every sign of the greatest veneration, as if it acknowledged him for its lord; and it remains there lying before him, and entirely unchained. Truly this must seem a strange story to those who have not seen the thing!

CHAPTER XVII

How the Great Khan enjoineth his People to supply him with Game

The three months of December, January, and February, during which the Emperor resides at his Capital City, are assigned for hunting and fowling, to the extent of some 40 days' journey round the city; and it is ordained that the larger game taken be sent to the Court. To be more particular: of all the larger beasts of the chase, such as boars, roebucks, bucks, stags, lions, bears, etc., the greater part of what is taken has to be sent, and feathered game likewise. The animals are gutted and despatched to the Court on carts. This is done by all the people within 20 or 30 days' journey, and the quantity so despatched is immense. Those at a greater distance cannot send the game, but they have to send the skins after tanning them, and these are employed in the making of equipments for the Emperor's army.

CHAPTER XVIII

Of the Lions and Leopards and Wolves that the Khan keeps for the Chase

The Emperor hath numbers of leopards trained to the chase, and hath also a great many lynxes taught in like manner to catch game, and which afford excellent sport. He hath also several great Lions, bigger than those of Babylonia, beasts whose skins are coloured in the most beautiful way, being striped all along the sides with black, red, and white. These are trained to catch boars and wild cattle, bears, wild asses, stags, and other great or fierce beasts. And 'tis a rare sight, I can tell you, to see those lions giving chase to such beasts as I have mentioned! When they are to be so employed the Lions are taken out in a covered cart, and every Lion has a little doggie with him. [They are obliged to approach the game against the wind, otherwise the animals would scent the approach of the Lion and be off.]

There are also a great number of eagles, all broken to catch wolves, foxes, deer, and wild goats, and they do catch them in great numbers. But those especially that are trained to wolf-catching are very large and powerful birds, and no wolf is able to get away from them.

CHAPTER XIX

Concerning the Two Brothers who have charge of the Khan's Hounds

The Emperor hath two Barons who are own brothers, one called Baian and the other Mingan; and these two are styled *Chinuchi* (or *Cunichi*), which is as much as to say, "The Keepers of the Mastiff Dogs." Each of these brothers hath 10,000 men under his orders; each body of 10,000 being dressed alike, the one in red and

the other in blue, and whenever they accompany the Lord to the chase, they wear this livery, in order to be recognized. Out of each body of 10,000 there are 2000 men who are each in charge of one or more great mastiffs, so that the whole number of these is very large. And when the Prince goes a-hunting, one of those Barons, with his 10,000 men and something like 5000 dogs, goes towards the right, whilst the other goes towards the left with his party in like manner. They move along, all abreast of one another, so that the whole line extends over a full day's journey, and no animal can escape them. Truly it is a glorious sight to see the working of the dogs and the huntsmen on such an occasion! And as the Lord rides a-fowling across the plains, you will see these big hounds coming tearing up, one pack after a bear, another pack after a stag, or some other beast, as it may hap, and running the game down now on this side and now on that, so that it is really a most delightful sport and spectacle.

[The Two Brothers I have mentioned are bound by the tenure of their office to supply the Khan's Court from October to the end of March with 1000 head of game daily, whether of beasts or birds, and not counting quails; and also with fish to the best of their ability, allowing fish enough for three persons to reckon as equal to one head of game.]

Now I have told you of the Masters of the Hounds and all about them, and next will I tell you how the Lord goes off on an expedition for the space of three months.

CHAPTER XX

How the Emperor goes on a Hunting Expedition

After he has stopped at his capital city those three months that I mentioned, to wit, December, January, February, he starts off on the 1st day of March, and

travels eastward towards the Ocean Sea, a journey of two days. He takes with him full 10,000 falconers, and some 500 gerfalcons besides peregrines, sakers, and other hawks in great numbers; and goshawks also to fly at the water-fowl. But do not suppose that he keeps all these together by him; they are distributed about, hither and thither, one hundred together, or two hundred at the utmost, as he thinks proper. But they are always fowling as they advance, and the most part of the quarry taken is carried to the Emperor. And let me tell you when he goes thus a-fowling with his gerfalcons and other hawks, he is attended by full 10,000 men who are disposed in couples; and these are called *Toscaol*, which is as much as to say, "Watchers." And the name describes their business. They are posted from spot to spot, always in couples, and thus they cover a great deal of ground! Every man of them is provided with a whistle and hood, so as to be able to call in a hawk and hold it in hand. And when the Emperor makes a cast, there is no need that he follow it up, for those men I speak of keep so good a look out that they never lose sight of the birds, and if these have need of help they are ready to render it.

All the Emperor's hawks, and those of the Barons as well, have a little label attached to the leg to mark them, on which is written the names of the owner and the keeper of the bird. And in this way the hawk, when caught, is at once identified and handed over to its owner. But if not, the bird is carried to a certain Baron, who is styled the *Bularguchi*, which is as much as to say "The Keeper of Lost Property." And I tell you that whatever may be found without a known owner, whether it be a horse, or a sword, or a hawk, or what not, it is carried to that Baron straightway, and he takes charge of it. And if the finder neglects to carry his trover to the Baron, the latter punishes him. Likewise the loser of any article goes to the Baron, and if the thing be in his hands it is imme-

diately given up to the owner. Moreover, the said Baron always pitches on the highest spot of the camp, with his banner displayed, in order that those who have lost or found anything may have no difficulty in finding their way to him. Thus nothing can be lost but it shall be incontinently found and restored.

And so the Emperor follows this road that I have mentioned, leading along in the vicinity of the Ocean Sea (which is within two days' journey of his capital city, Cambaluc), and as he goes there is many a fine sight to be seen, and plenty of the very best entertainment in hawking; in fact, there is no sport in the world to equal it!

The Emperor himself is carried upon four elephants in a fine chamber made of timber, lined inside with plates of beaten gold, and outside with lions' skins [for he always travels in this way on his fowling expeditions, because he is troubled with gout]. He always keeps beside him a dozen of his choicest gerfalcons, and is attended by several of his Barons, who ride on horseback alongside. And sometimes, as they may be going along, and the Emperor from his chamber is holding discourse with the Barons, one of the latter shall exclaim: "Sire! Look out for Cranes!" Then the Emperor instantly has the top of his chamber thrown open, and having marked the cranes he casts one of his gerfalcons, whichever he pleases; and often the quarry is struck within his view, so that he has the most exquisite sport and diversion, there as he sits in his chamber or lies on his bed; and all the Barons with him get the enjoyment of it likewise! So it is not without reason I tell you that I do not believe there ever existed in the world or ever will exist, a man with such sport and enjoyment as he has, or with such rare opportunities.

And when he has travelled till he reaches a place called Katzar Modun, there he finds his tents pitched, with the tents of his Sons, and his Barons, and those of his Ladies and theirs, so that there shall be full 10,000

tents in all, and all fine and rich ones. And I will tell you how his own quarters are disposed. The tent in which he holds his courts is large enough to give cover easily to a thousand souls. It is pitched with its door to the south, and the Barons and Knights remain in waiting in it, whilst the Lord abides in another close to it on the west side. When he wishes to speak with any one he causes the person to be summoned to that other tent. Immediately behind the great tent there is a fine large chamber where the Lord sleeps; and there are also many other tents and chambers, but they are not in contact with the Great Tent as these are. The two audience-tents and the sleeping-chamber are constructed in this way. Each of the audience-tents has three poles, which are of spice-wood, and are most artfully covered with lions' skins, striped with black and white and red, so that they do not suffer from any weather. All three apartments are also covered outside with similar skins of striped lions, a substance that lasts for ever. And inside they are all lined with ermine and sable, these two being the finest and most costly furs in existence. For a robe of sable, large enough to line a mantle, is worth 2000 bezants of gold, or 1000 at least, and this kind of skin is called by the Tartars "The King of Furs." The beast itself is about the size of a marten. These two furs of which I speak are applied and inlaid so exquisitely, that it is really something worth seeing. All the tent-ropes are of silk. And in short I may say that those tents, to wit the two audience-halls and the sleeping-chamber, are so costly that it is not every king could pay for them.

Round about these tents are others, also fine ones and beautifully pitched, in which are the Emperor's ladies, and the ladies of the other princes and officers. And then there are the tents for the hawks and their keepers, so that altogether the number of tents there on the plain is something wonderful. To see the many people that are thronging to and fro on every side and every day there,

you would take the camp for a good big city. For you must reckon the Leeches, and the Astrologers, and the Falconers, and all the other attendants on so great a company; and add that everybody there has his whole family with him, for such is their custom.

The Lord remains encamped there until the spring, and all that time he does nothing but go hawking round about among the canebrakes along the lakes and rivers that abound in that region, and across fine plains on which are plenty of cranes and swans, and all sorts of other fowl. The other gentry of the camp also are never done with hunting and hawking, and every day they bring home great store of venison and feathered game of all sorts. Indeed, without having witnessed it, you would never believe what quantities of game are taken, and what marvellous sport and diversion they all have whilst they are in camp there.

There is another thing I should mention; to wit, that for 20 days' journey round the spot nobody is allowed, be he who he may, to keep hawks or hounds, though anywhere else whosoever list may keep them. And furthermore throughout all the Emperor's territories, nobody however audacious dares to hunt any of these four animals, to wit, hare, stag, buck, and roe, from the month of March to the month of October. Anybody who should do so would rue it bitterly. But those people are so obedient to their Lord's command, that even if a man were to find one of those animals asleep by the roadside he would not touch it for the world! And thus the game multiplies at such a rate that the whole country swarms with it, and the Emperor gets as much as he could desire. Beyond the term I have mentioned, however, to wit that from March to October, everybody may take these animals as he list.

After the Emperor has tarried in that place, enjoying his sport as I have related, from March to the middle of May, he moves with all his people, and returns straight

to his capital city of Cambaluc (which is also the capital of Cathay, as you have been told), but all the while continuing to take his diversion in hunting and hawking as he goes along.

CHAPTER XXI

Rehearsal of the way the Year of the Great Khan is Distributed

On arriving at his capital of Cambaluc, he stays in his palace there three days and no more; during which time he has great court entertainments and rejoicings, and makes merry with his wives. He then quits his palace at Cambaluc, and proceeds to that city which he has built, as I told you before, and which is called Shangtu, where he has that grand park and palace of cane, and where he keeps his gerfalcons in mew. There he spends the summer, to escape the heat, for the situation is a very cool one. After stopping there from the beginning of May to the 28th of August, he takes his departure (that is the time when they sprinkle the white mares' milk as I told you), and returns to his capital, Cambaluc. There he stops, as I have told you also, the month of September, to keep his Birthday Feast, and also throughout October, November, December, January, and February, in which last month he keeps the grand feast of the New Year, which they call the White Feast, as you have heard already with all particulars. He then sets out on his march towards the Ocean Sea, hunting and hawking, and continues out from the beginning of March to the middle of May; and then comes back for three days only to the capital, during which he makes merry with his wives, and holds a great court and grand entertainments. In truth, 'tis something astonishing, the magnificence displayed by the Emperor in those three days; and then he starts off again as you know.

Thus his whole year is distributed in the following

manner: six months at his chief palace in the royal city of Cambaluc, to wit, *September*, *October*, *November*, *December*, *January*, *February;*

Then on the great hunting expedition towards the sea, *March*, *April*, *May;*

Then back to his palace at Cambaluc for *three days;*

Then off to the city of Shangtu which he has built, and where the Cane Palace is, where he stays *June*, *July*, *August;*

Then back again to his capital city of Cambaluc.

So thus the whole year is spent; six months at the capital, three months in hunting, and three months at the Cane Palace to avoid the heat. And in this way he passes his time with the greatest enjoyment; not to mention occasional journeys in this or that direction at his own pleasure.

CHAPTER XXII

Concerning the City of Cambaluc, and its Great Traffic and Population

You must know that the city of Cambaluc hath such a multitude of houses, and such a vast population inside the walls and outside, that it seems quite past all possibility. There is a suburb outside each of the gates, which are twelve in number; and these suburbs are so great that they contain more people than the city itself [for the suburb of one gate spreads in width till it meets the suburb of the next, whilst they extend in length some three or four miles]. In those suburbs lodge the foreign merchants and travellers, of whom there are always great numbers who have come to bring presents to the Emperor, or to sell articles at Court, or because the city affords so good a mart to attract traders. [There are in each of the suburbs, to a distance of a mile from the city, numerous fine hostelries for the lodgment of merchants from different parts of the world, and a special

hostelry is assigned to each description of people, as if we should say there is one for the Lombards, another for the Germans, and a third for the Frenchmen.] And thus there are as many good houses outside of the city as inside, without counting those that belong to the great lords and barons, which are very numerous.

You must know that it is forbidden to bury any dead body inside the city. If the body be that of an Idolater it is carried out beyond the city and suburbs to a remote place assigned for the purpose, to be burnt. And if it be of one belonging to a religion the custom of which is to bury, such as the Christian, the Saracen, or what not, it is also carried out beyond the suburbs to a distant place assigned for the purpose. And thus the city is preserved in a better and more healthy state.

Moreover, no public woman resides inside the city, but all such abide outside in the suburbs. And 'tis wonderful what a vast number of these there are for the foreigners; it is a certain fact that there are more than 20,000 of them living by prostitution. And that so many can live in this way will show you how vast is the population.

[Guards patrol the city every night in parties of 30 or 40, looking out for any persons who may be abroad at unseasonable hours, *i.e.* after the great bell hath stricken thrice. If they find any such person he is immediately taken to prison, and examined next morning by the proper officers. If these find him guilty of any misdemeanour they order him a proportionate beating with the stick. Under this punishment people sometimes die; but they adopt it in order to eschew bloodshed; for their *Bakshis* say that it is an evil thing to shed man's blood.]

To this city also are brought articles of greater cost and rarity, and in greater abundance of all kinds, than to any other city in the world. For people of every description, and from every region, bring things (includ-

ing all the costly wares of India, as well as the fine and precious goods of Cathay itself with its provinces), some for the sovereign, some for the court, some for the city which is so great, some for the crowds of Barons and Knights, some for the great hosts of the Emperor which are quartered round about; and thus between court and city the quantity brought in is endless.

As a sample, I tell you, no day in the year passes that there do not enter the city 1000 cart-loads of silk alone, from which are made quantities of cloth of silk and gold, and of other goods. And this is not to be wondered at; for in all the countries round about there is no flax, so that everything has to be made of silk. It is true, indeed, that in some parts of the country there is cotton and hemp, but not sufficient for their wants. This, however, is not of much consequence, because silk is so abundant and cheap, and is a more valuable substance than either flax or cotton.

Round about this great city of Cambaluc there are some 200 other cities at various distances, from which traders come to sell their goods and buy others for their lords; and all find means to make their sales and purchases, so that the traffic of the city is passing great.

CHAPTER XXIII

[Concerning the Oppressions of Ahmad the Bailo, and the Plot that was formed against Him]

You will hear further on how that there are twelve persons appointed who have authority to dispose of lands, offices, and everything else at their discretion. Now one of these was a certain Saracen named Ahmad, a shrewd and able man, who had more power and influence with the Grand Khan than any of the others; and the Khan held him in such regard that he could do what he pleased. The fact was, as came out after his death, that Ahmad

had so wrought upon the Khan with his sorcery, that the latter had the greatest faith and reliance on everything he said, and in this way did everything that Ahmad wished him to do.

This person disposed of all governments and offices, and passed sentence on all malefactors; and whenever he desired to have any one whom he hated put to death, whether with justice or without it, he would go to the Emperor and say: "Such an one deserves death, for he hath done this or that against your imperial dignity." Then the Lord would say: "Do as you think right," and so he would have the man forthwith executed. Thus when people saw how unbounded were his powers, and how unbounded the reliance placed by the Emperor on everything that he said, they did not venture to oppose him in anything. No one was so high in rank or power as to be free from the dread of him. If any one was accused by him to the Emperor of a capital offence, and desired to defend himself, he was unable to bring proofs in his own exculpation, for no one would stand by him, as no one dared to oppose Ahmad. And thus the latter caused many to perish unjustly.

Moreover, there was no beautiful woman whom he might desire, but he got hold of her; if she were unmarried, forcing her to be his wife, if otherwise, compelling her to consent to his desires. Whenever he knew of any one who had a pretty daughter, certain ruffians of his would go to the father, and say: "What say you? Here is this pretty daughter of yours; give her in marriage to the Bailo Ahmad (for they called him 'the Bailo,' or, as we should say, 'the Vicegerent'), and we will arrange for his giving you such a government or such an office for three years." And so the man would surrender his daughter. And Ahmad would go to the Emperor, and say: "Such a government is vacant, or will be vacant on such a day. So-and-So is a proper man for the post." And the Emperor would reply: "Do as you think best;"

and the father of the girl was immediately appointed to the government. Thus either through the ambition of the parents, or through fear of the Minister, all the beautiful women were at his beck, either as wives or mistresses. Also he had some five-and-twenty sons who held offices of importance, and some of these, under the protection of their father's name, committed scandals like his own, and many other abominable iniquities. This Ahmad also had amassed great treasure, for everybody who wanted office sent him a heavy bribe.

In such authority did this man continue for two-and-twenty years. At last the people of the country, to wit the Cathayans, utterly wearied with the endless outrages and abominable iniquities which he perpetrated against them, whether as regarded their wives or their own persons, conspired to slay him and revolt against the government. Amongst the rest there was a certain Cathayan named Chang-y, a commander of a thousand, whose mother, daughter, and wife had all been dishonoured by Ahmad. Now this man, full of bitter resentment, entered into parley regarding the destruction of the Minister with another Cathayan whose name was Wangchu, who was a commander of 10,000. They came to the conclusion that the time to do the business would be during the Great Khan's absence from Cambaluc. For after stopping there three months he used to go to Shangtu and stop there three months; and at the same time his son Chimkin used to go away to his usual haunts, and this Ahmad remained in charge of the city; sending to obtain the Khan's orders from Shangtu when any emergency arose.

So Wangchu and Chang-y, having come to this conclusion, proceeded to communicate it to the chief people among the Cathayans, and then by common consent sent word to their friends in many other cities that they had determined on such a day, at the signal given by a beacon, to massacre all the men with beards, and that

the other cities should stand ready to do the like on seeing the signal fires. The reason why they spoke of massacring the bearded men was that the Cathayans naturally have no beards, whilst beards are worn by the Tartars, Saracens, and Christians. And you should know that all the Cathayans detested the Grand Khan's rule because he set over them governors who were Tartars, or still more frequently Saracens, and these they could not endure, for they were treated by them just like slaves. You see the Great Khan had not succeeded to the dominion of Cathay by hereditary right, but held it by conquest; and thus having no confidence in the natives, he put all authority into the hands of Tartars, Saracens, or Christians who were attached to his household and devoted to his service, and were foreigners in Cathay.

Wherefore, on the day appointed, the aforesaid Wangchu and Chang-y having entered the palace at night, Wangchu sat down and caused a number of lights to be kindled before him. He then sent a messenger to Ahmad the Bailo, who lived in the Old City, as if to summon him to the presence of Chimkin, the Great Khan's son, who (it was pretended) had arrived unexpectedly. When Ahmad heard this he was much surprised, but made haste to go, for he feared the Prince greatly. When he arrived at the gate he met a Tartar called Cogatai, who was Captain of the 12,000 that formed the standing garrison of the City; and the latter asked him whither he was bound so late? "To Chimkin, who is just arrived." Quoth Cogatai, "How can that be? How could he come so privily that I know nought of it?" So he followed the Minister with a certain number of his soldiers. Now the notion of the Cathayans was that, if they could make an end of Ahmad, they would have nought else to be afraid of. So as soon as Ahmad got inside the palace, and saw all that illumination, he bowed down before Wangchu, supposing him to be Chimkin, and Chang-y who was standing ready with a sword straightway cut

his head off. As soon as Cogatai, who had halted at the entrance, beheld this, he shouted "Treason!" and instantly discharged an arrow at Wangchu and shot him dead as he sat. At the same time he called his people to seize Chang-y, and sent a proclamation through the city that any one found in the streets would be instantly put to death. The Cathayans saw that the Tartars had discovered the plot, and that they had no longer any leader, since Wangchu was killed and Chang-y was taken. So they kept still in their houses, and were unable to pass the signal for the rising of the other cities as had been settled. Cogatai immediately dispatched messengers to the Great Khan giving an orderly report of the whole affair, and the Khan sent back orders for him to make a careful investigation, and to punish the guilty as their misdeeds deserved. In the morning Cogatai examined all the Cathayans, and put to death a number whom he found to be ringleaders in the plot. The same thing was done in the other cities, when it was found that the plot extended to them also.

After the Great Khan had returned to Cambaluc he was very anxious to discover what had led to this affair, and he then learned all about the endless iniquities of that accursed Ahmad and his sons. It was proved that he and seven of his sons (for they were not all bad) had forced no end of women to be their wives, besides those whom they had ravished. The Great Khan then ordered all the treasure that Ahmad had accumulated in the Old City to be transferred to his own treasury in the New City, and it was found to be of enormous amount. He also ordered the body of Ahmad to be dug up and cast into the streets for the dogs to tear; and commanded those of his sons that had followed the father's evil example to be flayed alive.

These circumstances called the Khan's attention to the accursed doctrines of the Sect of the Saracens, which excuse every crime, yea even murder itself, when com-

mitted on such as are not of their religion. And seeing that this doctrine had led the accursed Ahmad and his sons to act as they did without any sense of guilt, the Khan was led to entertain the greatest disgust and abomination for it. So he summoned the Saracens and prohibited their doing many things which their religion enjoined. Thus, he ordered them to regulate their marriages by the Tartar Law, and prohibited their cutting the throats of animals killed for food, ordering them to rip the stomach in the Tartar way.

Now when all this happened Messer Marco was upon the spot.]

CHAPTER XXIV

How the Great Khan causeth the Bark of Trees, made into something like Paper, to pass for Money over all his Country

Now that I have told you in detail of the splendour of this City of the Emperor's, I shall proceed to tell you of the Mint which he hath in the same city, in the which he hath his money coined and struck, as I shall relate to you. And in doing so I shall make manifest to you how it is that the Great Lord may well be able to accomplish even much more than I have told you, or am going to tell you, in this Book. For, tell it how I might, you never would be satisfied that I was keeping within truth and reason!

The Emperor's Mint then is in this same City of Cambaluc, and the way it is wrought is such that you might say he hath the Secret of Alchemy in perfection, and you would be right! For he makes his money after this fashion.

He makes them take of the bark of a certain tree, in fact of the Mulberry Tree, the leaves of which are the food of the silkworms,—these trees being so numerous that whole districts are full of them. What they take is

a certain fine white bast or skin which lies between the wood of the tree and the thick outer bark, and this they make into something resembling sheets of paper, but black. When these sheets have been prepared they are cut up into pieces of different sizes. The smallest of these sizes is worth a half tornesel; the next, a little larger, one tornesel; one, a little larger still, is worth half a silver groat of Venice; another a whole groat; others yet two groats, five groats, and ten groats. There is also a kind worth one Bezant of gold, and others of three Bezants, and so up to ten. All these pieces of paper are [issued with as much solemnity and authority as if they were of pure gold or silver; and on every piece a variety of officials, whose duty it is, have to write their names, and to put their seals. And when all is prepared duly, the chief officer deputed by the Khan smears the Seal entrusted to him with vermilion, and impresses it on the paper, so that the form of the Seal remains printed upon it in red; the Money is then authentic. Any one forging it would be punished with death.] And the Khan causes every year to be made such a vast quantity of this money, which costs him nothing, that it must equal in amount all the treasure in the world.

With these pieces of paper, made as I have described, he causes all payments on his own account to be made; and he makes them to pass current universally over all his kingdoms and provinces and territories, and whithersoever his power and sovereignty extends. And nobody, however important he may think himself, dares to refuse them on pain of death. And indeed everybody takes them readily, for wheresoever a person may go throughout the Great Khan's dominions he shall find these pieces of paper current, and shall be able to transact all sales and purchases of goods by means of them just as well as if they were coins of pure gold. And all the while they are so light that ten bezants' worth does not weigh one golden bezant.

Furthermore all merchants arriving from India or other countries, and bringing with them gold or silver or gems and pearls, are prohibited from selling to any one but the Emperor. He has twelve experts chosen for this business, men of shrewdness and experience in such affairs; these appraise the articles, and the Emperor then pays a liberal price for them in those pieces of paper. The merchants accept his price readily, for in the first place they would not get so good an one from anybody else, and secondly they are paid without any delay. And with this paper-money they can buy what they like anywhere over the Empire, whilst it is also vastly lighter to carry about on their journeys. And it is a truth that the merchants will several times in the year bring wares to the amount of 400,000 bezants, and the Grand Sire pays for all in that paper. So he buys such a quantity of those precious things every year that his treasure is endless, whilst all the time the money he pays away costs him nothing at all. Moreover, several times in the year proclamation is made through the city that any one who may have gold or silver or gems or pearls, by taking them to the Mint shall get a handsome price for them. And the owners are glad to do this, because they would find no other purchaser give so large a price. Thus the quantity they bring in is marvellous, though these who do not choose to do so may let it alone. Still, in this way, nearly all the valuables in the country come into the Khan's possession.

When any of those pieces of paper are spoilt—not that they are so very flimsy neither—the owner carries them to the Mint, and by paying three per cent. on the value he gets new pieces in exchange. And if any Baron, or any one else soever, hath need of gold or silver or gems or pearls, in order to make plate, or girdles, or the like, he goes to the Mint and buys as much as he list, paying in this paper-money.

Now you have heard the ways and means whereby

the Great Khan may have, and in fact *has*, more treasure than all the Kings in the World; and you know all about it and the reason why. And now I will tell you of the great Dignitaries which act in this city on behalf of the Emperor.

CHAPTER XXV

Concerning the Twelve Barons who are set over all the Affairs of the Great Khan

You must know that the Great Khan hath chosen twelve great Barons to whom he hath committed all the necessary affairs of thirty-four great provinces; and now I will tell you particulars about them and their establishments.

You must know that these twelve Barons reside all together in a very rich and handsome palace, which is inside the city of Cambaluc, and consists of a variety of edifices, with many suites of apartments. To every province is assigned a judge and several clerks, and all reside in this palace, where each has his separate quarters. These judges and clerks administer all the affairs of the provinces to which they are attached, under the direction of the twelve Barons. Howbeit, when an affair is of very great importance, the twelve Barons lay it before the Emperor, and he decides as he thinks best. But the power of those twelve Barons is so great that they choose the governors for all those thirty-four great provinces that I have mentioned, and only after they have chosen do they inform the Emperor of their choice. This he confirms, and grants to the person nominated a tablet of gold such as is appropriate to the rank of his government.

Those twelve Barons also have such authority that they can dispose of the movements of the forces, and send them whither, and in such strength, as they please. This is done indeed with the Emperor's cognizance, but still the orders are issued on their authority. They

are styled SHIENG, which is as much as to say "The Supreme Court," and the palace where they abide is also called *Shieng*. This body forms the highest authority at the Court of the Great Khan; and indeed they can favour and advance whom they will. I will not now name the thirty-four provinces to you, because they will be spoken of in detail in the course of this Book.

CHAPTER XXVI

How the Khan's Posts and Runners are sped through many Lands and Provinces

Now you must know that from this city of Cambaluc proceed many roads and highways leading to a variety of provinces, one to one province, another to another; and each road receives the name of the province to which it leads; and it is a very sensible plan. And the messengers of the Emperor in travelling from Cambaluc, be the road whichsoever they will, find at every twenty-five miles of the journey a station which they call *Yamb*, or, as we should say, the "Horse-Post-House." And at each of those stations used by the messengers, there is a large and handsome building for them to put up at, in which they find all the rooms furnished with fine beds and all other necessary articles in rich silk, and where they are provided with everything they can want. If even a king were to arrive at one of these, he would find himself well lodged.

At some of these stations, moreover, there shall be posted some four hundred horses standing ready for the use of the messengers; at others there shall be two hundred, according to the requirements, and to what the Emperor has established in each case. At every twenty-five miles, as I said, or anyhow at every thirty miles, you find one of these stations, on all the principal highways leading to the different provincial governments;

and the same is the case throughout all the chief provinces subject to the Great Khan. Even when the messengers have to pass through a roadless tract where neither house nor hostel exists, still there the station-houses have been established just the same, excepting that the intervals are somewhat greater, and the day's journey is fixed at thirty-five to forty-five miles, instead of twenty-five to thirty. But they are provided with horses and all the other necessaries just like those we have described, so that the Emperor's messengers, come they from what region they may, find everything ready for them.

And in sooth this is a thing done on the greatest scale of magnificence that ever was seen. Never had emperor, king, or lord such wealth as this manifests! For it is a fact that on all these posts taken together there are more than 300,000 horses kept up, specially for the use of the messengers. And the great buildings that I have mentioned are more than 10,000 in number, all richly furnished, as I told you. The thing is on a scale so wonderful and costly that it is hard to bring oneself to describe it.

[Should any one find it difficult to understand how there should be such a population as all this implies, and how they can subsist, the answer is that all the Idolaters, and Saracens as well, take six, eight, or ten wives apiece when they can afford it, and beget an infinity of children. In fact, you shall find many men who have each more than thirty sons who form an armed retinue to their father, and this through the fact of his having so many wives. With us, on the other hand, a man hath but one wife; and if she be barren, still he must abide by her for life, and have no progeny; thus we have not such a population as they have.

And as regards food, they have abundance; for they generally consume rice, panic, and millet (especially the Tartars, Cathayans, and people of Manzi); and these three crops in those countries render an hundred-fold.

Those nations use no bread, but only boil those kinds of grain with milk or meat for their victual. Their wheat, indeed, does not render so much, but this they use only to make vermicelli, and pastes of that description. No spot of arable land is left untilled; and their cattle are infinitely prolific, so that when they take the field every man is followed by six, eight, or more horses for his own use. Thus you may clearly perceive how the population of those parts is so great, and how they have such an abundance of food.]

But now I will tell you another thing that I had forgotten, but which ought to be told whilst I am on this subject. You must know that by the Great Khan's orders there has been established between those post-houses, at every interval of three miles, a little fort with some forty houses round about it, in which dwell the people who act as the Emperor's foot-runners. Every one of those runners wears a great wide belt, set all over with bells, so that as they run the three miles from post to post their bells are heard jingling a long way off. And thus on reaching the post the runner finds another man similarly equipt, and all ready to take his place, who instantly takes over whatsoever he has in charge, and with it receives a slip of paper from the clerk, who is always at hand for the purpose; and so the new man sets off and runs his three miles. At the next station he finds his relief ready in like manner; and so the post proceeds, with a change at every three miles. And in this way the Emperor, who has an immense number of these runners, receives despatches with news from places ten days' journey off in one day and night; or, if need be, news from a hundred days off in ten days and nights; and that is no small matter! (In fact in the fruit season many a time fruit shall be gathered one morning in Cambaluc, and the evening of the next day it shall reach the Great Khan at Shangtu, a distance of ten days' journey. The clerk at each of the posts notes the time

of each courier's arrival and departure; and there are often other officers whose business it is to make monthly visitations of all the posts, and to punish those runners who have been slack in their work.) The Emperor exempts these men from all tribute, and pays them besides.

Moreover, there are also at those stations other men equipt similarly with girdles hung with bells, who are employed for expresses when there is a call for great haste in sending despatches to any governor of a province, or to give news when any Baron has revolted, or in other such emergencies; and these men travel a good two hundred or two hundred and fifty miles in the day, and as much in the night. I'll tell you how it stands. They take a horse from those at the station which are standing ready saddled, all fresh and in wind, and mount and go at full speed, as hard as they can ride in fact. And when those at the next post hear the bells they get ready another horse and a man equipt in the same way, and he takes over the letter or whatever it be, and is off full speed to the third station, where again a fresh horse is found all ready, and so the despatch speeds along from post to post, always at full gallop, with regular change of horses. And the speed at which they go is marvellous. (By night, however, they cannot go so fast as by day, because they have to be accompanied by footmen with torches, who could not keep up with them at full speed.)

Those men are highly prized; and they could never do it, did they not bind hard the stomach, chest and head with strong bands. And each of them carries with him a gerfalcon tablet, in sign that he is bound on an urgent express; so that if perchance his horse break down, or he meet with other mishap, whomsoever he may fall in with on the road, he is empowered to make him dismount and give up his horse. Nobody dares refuse in such a case; so that the courier hath always a good fresh nag to carry him.

Now all these numbers of post-horses cost the Emperor nothing at all; and I will tell you the how and the why. Every city, or village, or hamlet, that stands near one of those post-stations, has a fixed demand made on it for as many horses as it can supply, and these it must furnish to the post. And in this way are provided all the posts of the cities, as well as the towns and villages round about them; only in uninhabited tracts the horses are furnished at the expense of the Emperor himself.

(Nor do the cities maintain the full number, say of 400 horses, always at their station, but month by month 200 shall be kept at the station, and the other 200 at grass, coming in their turn to relieve the first 200. And if there chance to be some river or lake to be passed by the runners and horse-posts, the neighbouring cities are bound to keep three or four boats in constant readiness for the purpose.)

And now I will tell you of the great bounty exercised by the Emperor towards his people twice a year.

CHAPTER XXVII

How the Emperor bestows Help on his People, when they are afflicted with Dearth or Murrain

Now you must know that the Emperor sends his Messengers over all his Lands and Kingdoms and Provinces, to ascertain from his officers if the people are afflicted by any dearth through unfavourable seasons, or storms or locusts, or other like calamity; and from those who have suffered in this way no taxes are exacted for that year; nay more, he causes them to be supplied with grain of his own for food and seed. Now this is undoubtedly a great bounty on his part. And when winter comes, he causes inquiry to be made as to those who have lost their cattle, whether by murrain or other mishap, and such persons not only go scot free, but get presents of cattle.

And thus, as I tell you, the Lord every year helps and fosters the people subject to him.

[There is another trait of the Great Khan I should tell you; and that is, that if a chance shot from his bow strike any herd or flock, whether belonging to one person or to many, and however big the flock may be, he takes no tithe thereof for three years. In like manner, if the arrow strike a boat full of goods, that boat-load pays no duty; for it is thought unlucky that an arrow strike any one's property; and the Great Khan says it would be an abomination before God, were such property, that has been struck by the divine wrath, to enter into his Treasury.]

CHAPTER XXVIII

How the Great Khan causes Trees to be Planted by the Highways

The Emperor moreover hath taken order that all the highways travelled by his messengers and the people generally should be planted with rows of great trees a few paces apart; and thus these trees are visible a long way off, and no one can miss the way by day or night. Even the roads through uninhabited tracts are thus planted, and it is the greatest possible solace to travellers. And this is done on all the ways, where it can be of service. [The Great Khan plants these trees all the more readily, because his astrologers and diviners tell him that he who plants trees lives long.

But where the ground is so sandy and desert that trees will not grow, he causes other landmarks, pillars or stones, to be set up to show the way.]

CHAPTER XXIX

Concerning the Rice-Wine drunk by the people of Cathay

Most of the people of Cathay drink wine of the kind that I shall now describe. It is a liquor which they brew of rice with a quantity of excellent spice, in such fashion that it makes better drink than any other kind of wine; it is not only good, but clear and pleasing to the eye. And being very hot stuff, it makes one drunk sooner than any other wine.

CHAPTER XXX

Concerning the Black Stones that are dug in Cathay, and are Burnt for Fuel

It is a fact that all over the country of Cathay there is a kind of black stones existing in beds in the mountains, which they dig out and burn like firewood. If you supply the fire with them at night, and see that they are well kindled, you will find them still alight in the morning; and they make such capital fuel that no other is used throughout the country. It is true that they have plenty of wood also, but they do not burn it, because those stones burn better and cost less.

[Moreover with that vast number of people, and the number of hot baths that they maintain—for every one has such a bath at least three times a week, and in winter if possible every day, whilst every nobleman and man of wealth has a private bath for his own use—the wood would not suffice for the purpose.]

CHAPTER XXXI

How the Great Khan causes Stores of Grain to be made, to help his People withal in time of Dearth

You must know that when the Emperor sees that grain is cheap and abundant, he buys up large quantities, and has it stored in all his provinces in great granaries, where it is so well looked after that it will keep for three or four years.

And this applies, let me tell you, to all kinds of grain, whether wheat, barley, millet, rice, panic, or what not, and when there is any scarcity of a particular kind of grain, he causes that to be issued. And if the price of the grain is at one bezant the measure, he lets them have it at a bezant for four measures, or at whatever price will produce general cheapness; and every one can have food in this way. And by this providence of the Emperor's, his people can never suffer from dearth. He does the same over his whole Empire; causing these supplies to be stored everywhere, according to calculation of the wants and necessities of the people.

CHAPTER XXXII

Of the Charity of the Emperor to the Poor

I have told you how the Great Khan provides for the distribution of necessaries to his people in time of dearth, by making store in time of cheapness. Now I will tell you of his alms and great charity to the poor of his city of Cambaluc.

You see he causes selection to be made of a number of families in the city which are in a state of indigence, and of such families some may consist of six in the house, some of eight, some of ten, more or fewer in each as it

may hap, but the whole number being very great. And each family he causes annually to be supplied with wheat and other grain sufficient for the whole year. And this he never fails to do every year. Moreover, all those who choose to go to the daily dole at the Court receive a great loaf apiece, hot from the baking, and nobody is denied; for so the Lord hath ordered. And so some 30,000 people go for it every day from year's end to year's end. Now this is a great goodness in the Emperor to take pity of his poor people thus! And they benefit so much by it that they worship him as he were God.

[He also provides the poor with clothes. For he lays a tithe upon all wool, silk, hemp, and the like, from which clothing can be made; and he has these woven and laid up in a building set apart for the purpose; and as all artizans are bound to give a day's labour weekly, in this way the Khan has these stuffs made into clothing for those poor families, suitable for summer or winter, according to the time of year. He also provides the clothing for his troops, and has woollens woven for them in every city, the material for which is furnished by the tithe aforesaid. You should know that the Tartars, before they were converted to the religion of the Idolaters, never practised almsgiving. Indeed, when any poor man begged of them they would tell him, "Go with God's curse, for if He loved you as He loves me, He would have provided for you." But the sages of the Idolaters, and especially the *Bakshis* mentioned before, told the Great Khan that it was a good work to provide for the poor, and that his idols would be greatly pleased if he did so. And since then he has taken to do for the poor so much as you have heard.]

CHAPTER XXXIII

[Concerning the Astrologers in the City of Cambaluc]

[There are in the city of Cambaluc, what with Christians, Saracens, and Cathayans, some five thousand astrologers and soothsayers, whom the Great Khan provides with annual maintenance and clothing, just as he provides the poor of whom we have spoken, and they are in the constant exercise of their art in this city.

They have a kind of astrolabe on which are inscribed the planetary signs, the hours and critical points of the whole year. And every year these Christian, Saracen, and Cathayan astrologers, each sect apart, investigate by means of this astrolabe the course and character of the whole year, according to the indications of each of its Moons, in order to discover by the natural course and disposition of the planets, and the other circumstances of the heavens, what shall be the nature of the weather, and what peculiarities shall be produced by each Moon of the year; as, for example, under which Moon there shall be thunderstorms and tempests, under which there shall be disease, murrain, wars, disorders, and treasons, and so on, according to the indications of each; but always adding that it lies with God to do less or more according to His pleasure. And they write down the results of their examination in certain little pamphlets for the year, which are called *Tacuin*, and these are sold for a groat to all who desire to know what is coming. Those of the astrologers, of course whose predictions are found to be most exact, are held to be the greatest adepts in their art, and get the greater fame.

And if any one having some great matter in hand, or proposing to make a long journey for traffic or other business, desires to know what will be the upshot, he goes to one of these astrologers and says: "Turn up

your books and see what is the present aspect of the heavens, for I am going away on such and such a business." Then the astrologer will reply that the applicant must also tell the year, month, and hour of his birth; and when he has got that information he will see how the horoscope of his nativity combines with the indications of the time when the question is put, and then he predicts the result, good or bad, according to the aspect of the heavens.

You must know, too, that the Tartars reckon their years by twelves; the sign of the first year being the Lion, of the second the Ox, of the third the Dragon, of the fourth the Dog, and so forth up to the twelfth; so that when one is asked the year of his birth he answers that it was in the year of the Lion (let us say), on such a day or night, at such an hour, and such a moment. And the father of a child always takes care to write these particulars down in a book. When the twelve yearly symbols have been gone through, then they come back to the first, and go through with them again in the same succession.]

CHAPTER XXXIV

[Concerning the Religion of the Cathayans; their views as to the Soul; and their Customs

As we have said before, these people are Idolaters, and as regards their gods, each has a tablet fixed high up on the wall of his chamber, on which is inscribed a name which represents the Most High and Heavenly God; and before this they pay daily worship, offering incense from a thurible, raising their hands aloft, and gnashing their teeth three times, praying Him to grant them health of mind and body; but of Him they ask nought else. And below on the ground there is a figure which they call *Natigai*, which is the god of things terrestrial. To him they give a wife and children, and they worship

him in the same manner, with incense, and gnashing of teeth, and lifting up of hands; and of him they ask seasonable weather, and the fruits of the earth, children, and so forth.

Their view of the immortality of the soul is after this fashion. They believe that as soon as a man dies, his soul enters into another body, going from a good to a better, or from a bad to a worse, according as he hath conducted himself well or ill. That is to say, a poor man, if he have passed through life good and sober, shall be born again of a gentlewoman, and shall be a gentleman; and on a second occasion shall be born of a princess and shall be a prince, and so on, always rising, till he be absorbed into the Deity. But if he have borne himself ill, he who was the son of a gentleman shall be reborn as the son of a boor, and from a boor shall become a dog, always going down lower and lower.

The people have an ornate style of speech; they salute each other with a cheerful countenance, and with great politeness; they behave like gentlemen, and eat with great propriety. They show great respect to their parents; and should there be any son who offends his parents, or fails to minister to their necessities, there is a public office which has no other charge but that of punishing unnatural children, who are proved to have acted with ingratitude towards their parents.

Criminals of sundry kinds who have been imprisoned, are released at a time fixed by the Great Khan (which occurs every three years), but on leaving prison they are branded on one cheek that they may be recognized.

The Great Khan hath prohibited all gambling and sharping, things more prevalent there than in any other part of the world. In doing this, he said: "I have conquered you by force of arms, and all that you have is mine; if, therefore, you gamble away your property, it is in fact my property that you are gambling away." Not that he took anything from them however.

I must not omit to tell you of the orderly way in which the Khan's Barons and others conduct themselves in coming to his presence. In the first place, within a half mile of the place where he is, out of reverence for his exalted majesty, everybody preserves a mien of the greatest meekness and quiet, so that no noise of shrill voices or loud talk shall be heard. And every one of the chiefs and nobles carries always with him a handsome little vessel to spit in whilst he remain in the Hall of Audience—for no one dares spit on the floor of the hall,—and when he hath spitten he covers it up and puts it aside. So also they all have certain handsome buskins of white leather, which they carry with them, and, when summoned by the sovereign, on arriving at the entrance to the hall, they put on these white buskins, and give their others in charge to the servants, in order that they may not foul the fine carpets of silk and gold and divers colours.]

Part II.—JOURNEY TO THE WEST AND SOUTH-WEST OF CATHAY

Part II.—JOURNEY TO THE WEST AND SOUTH-WEST OF CATHAY

CHAPTER XXXV

Here begins the Description of the Interior of Cathay; and first of the River Pulisangin

Now you must know that the Emperor sent the aforesaid Messer Marco Polo, who is the author of this whole story, on business of his into the Western Provinces. On that occasion he travelled from Cambaluc a good four months' journey towards the west. And so now I will tell you all that he saw on his travels as he went and returned.

When you leave the City of Cambaluc and have ridden ten miles, you come to a very large river which is called Pulisangin, and flows into the ocean, so that merchants with their merchandize ascend it from the sea. Over this River there is a very fine stone bridge, so fine indeed, that it has very few equals. The fashion of it is this: it is 300 paces in length, and it must have a good eight paces of width, for ten mounted men can ride across it abreast. It has 24 arches and as many water-mills, and 'tis all of very fine marble, well built and firmly founded. Along the top of the bridge there is on either side a parapet of marble slabs and columns, made in this way. At the beginning of the bridge there is a marble column, and under it a marble lion, so that the column stands upon the lion's loins, whilst on the top of the column there is a second marble lion, both being of great size and beautifully executed sculpture. At the distance of a pace from this column there is another precisely the same, also with its two lions, and the space between them

is closed with slabs of grey marble to prevent people from falling over into the water. And thus the columns run from space to space along either side of the bridge, so that altogether it is a beautiful object.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Account of the City of Juju

When you leave the Bridge, and ride towards the west, finding all the way excellent hostelries for travellers, with fine vineyards, fields, and gardens, and springs of water, you come after 30 miles to a fine large city called Juju, where there are many abbeys of idolaters, and the people live by trade and manufactures. They weave cloths of silk and gold, and very fine taffetas. Here too there are many hostelries for travellers.

After riding a mile beyond this city you find two roads, one of which goes west and the other south-east. The westerly road is that through Cathay, and the south-easterly one goes towards the province of Manzi.

Taking the westerly one through Cathay, and travelling by it for ten days, you find a constant succession of cities and boroughs, with numerous thriving villages, all abounding with trade and manufactures, besides the fine fields and vineyards and dwellings of civilized people; but nothing occurs worthy of special mention; and so I will only speak of a kingdom called Tai-yuen-fu.

CHAPTER XXXVII

The Kingdom of Tai-yuen-fu

After riding then those ten days from the city of Juju, you find yourself in a kingdom called Tai-yuen-fu, and the city at which you arrive, which is the capital, is also called Tai-yuen-fu, a very great and fine city. [But at the

end of five days' journey out of those ten, they say there is a city unusually large and handsome called AKBALIG, whereat terminate in this direction the hunting preserves of the Emperor, within which no one dares to sport except the Emperor and his family, and those who are on the books of the Grand Falconer. Beyond this limit any one is at liberty to sport, if he be a gentleman. The Great Khan, however, scarcely ever went hunting in this direction, and hence the game, particularly the hares, had increased and multiplied to such an extent that all the crops of the Province were destroyed. The Great Khan being informed of this, proceeded thither with all his Court, and the game that was taken was past counting.]

Tai-yuen-fu is a place of great trade and great industry, for here they manufacture a large quantity of the most necessary equipments for the army of the Emperor. There grow here many excellent vines, supplying great plenty of wine; and in all Cathay this is the only place where wine is produced. It is carried hence all over the country. There is also a great deal of silk here, for the people have great quantities of mulberry-trees and silkworms.

From this city of Tai-yuen-fu you ride westward again for seven days, through fine districts with plenty of towns and boroughs, all enjoying much trade and practising various kinds of industry. Out of these districts go forth not a few great merchants, who travel to India and other foreign regions, buying and selling and getting gain. After those seven days' journey you arrive at a city called PING-YANG-FU, a large and important place, with a number of traders living by commerce and industry. It is a place too where silk is largely produced.

So we will leave it and tell you of a great city called Ho-chung-fu. But stay—first let us tell you about the noble castle called Ki-chau.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Concerning the Castle of Ki-chau

On leaving Ping-yang-fu you ride two days westward, and come to the noble castle of Ki-chau, which was built in time past by a king of that country, whom they used to call the Golden King, and who had there a great and beautiful palace. There is a great hall of this palace, in which are portrayed all the ancient kings of the country, done in gold and other beautiful colours, and a very fine sight they make. Each king in succession as he reigned added to those pictures.

[This Golden King was a great and potent Prince, and during his stay at this place there used to be in his service none but beautiful girls, of whom he had a great number in his Court. When he went to take the air about the fortress, these girls used to draw him about in a little carriage which they could easily move, and they would also be in attendance on the King for everything pertaining to his convenience or pleasure.]

Now I will tell you a pretty passage that befel between the Golden King and Prester John, as it was related by the people of the Castle.

It came to pass, as they told the tale, that this Golden King was at war with Prester John. And the King held a position so strong that Prester John was not able to get at him or to do him any scathe; wherefore he was in great wrath. So seventeen gallants belonging to Prester John's Court came to him in a body, and said that, an he would, they were ready to bring him the Golden King alive. His answer was, that he desired nothing better, and would be much bounden to them if they would do so.

So when they had taken leave of their Lord and Master Prester John, they set off together, this goodly company of gallants, and went to the Golden King, and presented themselves before him, saying that they had come from

foreign parts to enter his service. And he answered by telling them that they were right welcome, and that he was glad to have their service, never imagining that they had any ill intent. And so these mischievous squires took service with the Golden King; and served him so well that he grew to love them dearly.

And when they had abode with that King nearly two years, conducting themselves like persons who thought of anything but treason, they one day accompanied the King on a pleasure party when he had very few else along with him: for in those gallants the King had perfect trust, and thus kept them immediately about his person. So after they had crossed a certain river that is about a mile from the castle, and saw that they were alone with the King, they said one to another that now was the time to achieve that they had come for. Then they all incontinently drew, and told the King that he must go with them and make no resistance, or they would slay him. The King at this was in alarm and great astonishment, and said: "How then, good my sons, what thing is this ye say? and whither would ye have me go?" They answered, and said: "You shall come with us, will ye nill ye, to Prester John our Lord."

CHAPTER XXXIX

How Prester John treated the Golden King his Prisoner

And on this the Golden King was so sorely grieved that he was like to die. And he said to them: "Good my sons, for God's sake have pity and compassion upon me. Ye wot well what honourable and kindly entertainment ye have had in my house; and now ye would deliver me into the hands of mine enemy! In sooth, if ye do what ye say, ye will do a very naughty and disloyal deed, and a right villainous." But they answered only that so it

must be, and away they had him to Prester John their Lord.

And when Prester John beheld the King he was right glad, and welcomed him with something like a malison. The King answered not a word, as if he wist not what it behoved him to say. So Prester John ordered him to be taken forth straightway, and to be put to look after cattle, but to be well looked after himself also. So they took him and set him to keep cattle. This did Prester John of the grudge he bore the King, to heap contumely on him, and to show what a nothing he was, compared to himself.

And when the King had thus kept cattle for two years, Prester John sent for him, and treated him with honour, and clothed him in rich robes, and said to him: "Now, Sir King, art thou satisfied that thou wast in no way a man to stand against me?" "Truly, my good Lord, I know well and always did know that I was in no way a man to stand against thee." And when he had said this Prester John replied: "I ask no more; but henceforth thou shalt be waited on and honourably treated." So he caused horses and harness of war to be given him, with a goodly train, and sent him back to his own country. And after that he remained ever friendly to Prester John, and held fast by him.

So now I will say no more of this adventure of the Golden King, but I will proceed with our subject.

CHAPTER XL

Concerning the Great River Karamuren and the City of Ho-chung-fu

When you leave the castle, and travel about 20 miles westward, you come to a river called Karamuren, so big that no bridge can be thrown across it; for it is of immense width and depth, and reaches to the Great

Ocean that encircles the Universe,—I mean the whole earth. On this river there are many cities and walled towns, and many merchants too therein, for much traffic takes place upon the river, there being a great deal of ginger and a great deal of silk produced in the country.

Game birds here are in wonderful abundance, insomuch that you may buy at least three pheasants for a Venice groat of silver. I should say rather for an *asper*, which is worth a little more.

[On the lands adjoining this river there grow vast quantities of great canes, some of which are a foot or a foot and a half (in girth), and these the natives employ for many useful purposes.]

After passing the river and travelling two days westward you come to the noble city of Ho-chung-fu, which we have already named. The inhabitants are all Idolaters. And I may as well remind you again that all the people of Cathay are Idolaters. It is a city of great trade and of work in gold-tissues of many sorts, as well as other kinds of industry.

There is nothing else worth mentioning, and so we will proceed and tell you of a noble city which is the capital of a kingdom, and is called Si-nan-fu.

CHAPTER XLI

Concerning the City of Si-nan-fu

And when you leave the city of Ho-chung-fu of which I have spoken, and travel eight days westward, you meet with cities and boroughs abounding in trade and industry, and quantities of beautiful trees, and gardens, and fine plains planted with mulberries, which are the trees on the leaves of which the silkworms do feed. The people are all Idolaters. There is also plenty of game of all sorts, both of beasts and birds.

And when you have travelled those eight days' journey,

you come to that great city which I mentioned, called SI-NAN-FU. A very great and fine city it is, and the capital of the kingdom of Si-nan-fu, which in old times was a noble, rich, and powerful realm, and had many great and wealthy and puissant kings. But now the king thereof is a prince called MANGALA, the son of the Great Khan, who hath given him this realm, and crowned him king thereof. It is a city of great trade and industry. They have great abundance of silk, from which they weave cloths of silk and gold of divers kinds, and they also manufacture all sorts of equipments for an army. They have every necessary of man's life very cheap. The city lies towards the west; the people are Idolaters; and outside the city is the palace of the Prince Mangala, crowned king, and son of the Great Khan, as I told you before.

This is a fine palace and a great, as I will tell you. It stands in a great plain abounding in lakes and streams and springs of water. Round about it is a massive and lofty wall, five miles in compass, well built, and all garnished with battlements. And within this wall is the king's palace, so great and fine that no one could imagine a finer. There are in it many great and splendid halls, and many chambers, all painted and embellished with work in beaten gold. This Mangala rules his realm right well with justice and equity, and is much beloved by his people. The troops are quartered round about the palace, and enjoy the sport (that the royal demesne affords).

So now let us quit this kingdom, and I will tell you of a very mountainous province called Han-chung, which you reach by a road right wearisome to travel.

CHAPTER XLII

Concerning the Province of Han-chung, which is right wearisome to travel through

On leaving the Palace of Mangala, you travel westward for three days, finding a succession of cities and boroughs and beautiful plains, inhabited by people who live by trade and industry, and have great plenty of silk. At the end of those three days, you reach the great mountains and valleys which belong to the province of Han-chung. There are towns and villages in the land, and the people live by tilling the earth, and by hunting in the great woods; for the region abounds in forests, wherein are many wild beasts, such as lions, bears, lynxes, bucks and roes, and sundry other kinds, so that many are taken by the people of the country, who make a great profit thereof. So this way we travel over mountains and valleys, finding a succession of towns and villages, and many great hostelries for the entertainment of travellers, interspersed among extensive forests.

CHAPTER XLIII

Concerning the Province of Akbalig Manzi

After you have travelled those 8 days through the mountains of Han-chung that I have mentioned, then you come to a province called Akbalig Manzi, which is all level country, with plenty of towns and villages, and belongs to the Great Khan. The people are Idolaters, and live by trade and industry. I may tell you that in this province, there grows such a great quantity of ginger, that it is carried all over the region of Cathay, and it affords a maintenance to all the people of the province, who get great gain thereby. They have also wheat and rice, and other kinds of corn, in great plenty and cheapness;

in fact the country abounds in all useful products. The capital city is called Akbalig Manzi [which signifies "the White City of the Manzi Frontier"].

This plain extends for two days' journey, throughout which it is as fine as I have told you, with towns and villages as numerous. After those two days, you again come to great mountains and valleys, and extensive forests, and you continue to travel westward through this kind of country for 20 days, finding however numerous towns and villages. The people are Idolaters, and live by agriculture, by cattle-keeping, and by the chase, for there is much game. And among other kinds, there are the animals that produce the musk, in great numbers.

CHAPTER XLIV

Concerning the Province and City of Cheng-tu

When you have travelled those 20 days westward through the mountains, as I have told you, then you arrive at a plain belonging to a province called Cheng-tu, which still is on the confines of Manzi, and the capital city of which is (also) called Cheng-tu. This city was in former days a rich and noble one, and the Kings who reigned there were very great and wealthy. It is a good twenty miles in compass, but it is divided in the way that I shall tell you.

You see the King of this Province, in the days of old, when he found himself drawing near to death, leaving three sons behind him, commanded that the city should be divided into three parts, and that each of his three sons should have one. So each of these three parts is separately walled about, though all three are surrounded by the common wall of the city. Each of the three sons was King, having his own part of the city, and his own share of the kingdom, and each of them in fact was a great and wealthy King. But the Great Khan conquered

the kingdom of these three Kings, and stripped them of their inheritance.

Through the midst of this great city runs a large river, in which they catch a great quantity of fish. It is a good half mile wide, and very deep withal, and so long that it reaches all the way to the Ocean Sea,—a very long way, equal to 80 or 100 days' journey. And the name of the River is KIANG-SUI. The multitude of vessels that navigate this river is so vast, that no one who should read or hear the tale would believe it. The quantities of merchandize also which merchants carry up and down this river are past all belief. In fact, it is so big, that it seems to be a Sea rather than a River!

Let us now speak of a great Bridge which crosses this River within the city. This bridge is of stone; it is seven paces in width and half a mile in length (the river being that much in width as I told you); and all along its length on either side there are columns of marble to bear the roof, for the bridge is roofed over from end to end with timber, and that all richly painted. And on this bridge there are houses in which a great deal of trade and industry is carried on. But these houses are all of wood merely, and they are put up in the morning and taken down in the evening. Also there stands upon the bridge the Great Khan's *Comercque*, that is to say, his custom-house, where his toll and tax are levied. And I can tell you that the dues taken on this bridge bring to the Lord a thousand pieces of fine gold every day and more. The people are all Idolaters.

When you leave this city you travel for five days across a country of plains and valleys, finding plenty of villages and hamlets, and the people of which live by husbandry. There are numbers of wild beasts, lions, and bears, and such like.

I should have mentioned that the people of Cheng-tu itself live by manufactures, for they make fine taffetas and other stuffs.

After travelling those five days' march, you reach a province called Tibet, which has been sadly laid waste; we will now say something of it.

CHAPTER XLV

Concerning the Province of Tibet

After those five days' march that I spoke of, you enter a province which has been sorely ravaged; and this was done in the wars of Mangu Khan. There are indeed towns and villages and hamlets, but all harried and destroyed.

In this region you find quantities of canes, full three palms in girth and fifteen paces in length, with some three palms' interval between the joints. And let me tell you that merchants and other travellers through that country are wont at nightfall to gather these canes and make fires of them; for as they burn they make such loud reports that the lions and bears and other wild beasts are greatly frightened, and make off as fast as possible; in fact nothing will induce them to come nigh a fire of that sort. So you see the travellers make those fires to protect themselves and their cattle from the wild beasts which have so greatly multiplied since the devastation of the country. And 'tis this great multiplication of the wild beasts that prevents the country from being reoccupied. In fact but for the help of these canes, which make such a noise in burning that the beasts are terrified and kept at a distance, no one would be able even to travel through the land.

I will tell you how it is that the canes make such a noise. The people cut the green canes, of which there are vast numbers, and set fire to a heap of them at once. After they have been awhile burning they burst asunder, and this makes such a loud report that you might hear it ten miles off. In fact, any one unused to this

noise, who should hear it unexpectedly, might easily go into a swound or die of fright. But those who are used to it care nothing about it. Hence those who are not used to it stuff their ears well with cotton, and wrap up their heads and faces with all the clothes they can muster; and so they get along until they have become used to the sound. 'Tis just the same with horses. Those which are unused to these noises are so alarmed by them that they break away from their halters and heel-ropes, and many a man has lost his beasts in this way. So those who would avoid losing their horses take care to tie all four legs and peg the ropes down strongly, and to wrap the heads and eyes and ears of the animals closely, and so they save them. But horses also, when they have heard the noise several times, cease to mind it. I tell you the truth, however, when I say that the first time you hear it nothing can be more alarming. And yet, in spite of all, the lions and bears and other wild beasts will sometimes come and do much mischief; for their numbers are great in those tracts.

You ride for 20 days without finding any inhabited spot, so that travellers are obliged to carry all their provisions with them, and are constantly falling in with those wild beasts which are so numerous and so dangerous. After that you come at length to a tract where there are towns and villages in considerable numbers. The people of those towns have a strange custom in regard to marriage which I will now relate.

No man of that country would on any consideration take to wife a girl who was a maid; for they say a wife is nothing worth unless she has been used to consort with men. And their custom is this, that when travellers come that way, the old women of the place get ready, and take their unmarried daughters or other girls related to them, and go to the strangers who are passing, and make over the young women to whomsoever will accept them; and the travellers take them accordingly and do their

pleasure; after which the girls are restored to the old women who brought them, for they are not allowed to follow the strangers away from their home. In this manner people travelling that way, when they reach a village or hamlet or other inhabited place, shall find perhaps 20 or 30 girls at their disposal. And if the travellers lodge with those people they shall have as many young women as they could wish coming to court them! You must know too that the traveller is expected to give the girl who has been with him a ring or some other trifle, something in fact that she can show as a lover's token when she comes to be married. And it is for this in truth and for this alone that they follow that custom; for every girl is expected to obtain at least 20 such tokens in the way I have described before she can be married. And those who have most tokens, and so can show they have been most run after, are in the highest esteem, and most sought in marriage, because they say the charms of such an one are greatest. But after marriage these people hold their wives very dear, and would consider it a great villainy for a man to meddle with another's wife; and thus though the wives have before marriage acted as you have heard, they are kept with great care from light conduct afterwards.

Now I have related to you this marriage custom as a good story to tell, and to show what a fine country that is for young fellows to go to!

The people are Idolaters and an evil generation, holding it no sin to rob and maltreat: in fact, they are the greatest brigands on earth. They live by the chase, as well as on their cattle and the fruits of the earth.

I should tell you also that in this country there are many of the animals that produce musk, which are called in the Tartar language *Gudderi*. Those rascals have great numbers of large and fine dogs, which are of great service in catching the musk-beasts, and so they procure great abundance of musk. They have none of the Great

Khan's paper money, but use salt instead of money. They are very poorly clad, for their clothes are only of the skins of beasts, and of canvas, and of buckram. They have a language of their own, and they are called Tibet. And this country of TIBET forms a very great province, of which I will give you a brief account.

CHAPTER XLVI

FURTHER DISCOURSE CONCERNING TIBET

THIS province, called Tibet, is of very great extent. The people, as I have told you, have a language of their own, and they are Idolaters, and they border on Manzi and sundry other regions. Moreover, they are very great thieves.

The country is, in fact, so great that it embraces eight kingdoms, and a vast number of cities and villages. It contains in several quarters rivers and lakes, in which gold-dust is found in great abundance. Cinnamon also grows there in great plenty. Coral is in great demand in this country and fetches a high price, for they delight to hang it round the necks of their women and of their idols. They have also in this country plenty of fine woollens and other stuffs, and many kinds of spices are produced there which are never seen in our country.

Among this people, too, you find the best enchanters and astrologers that exist in all that quarter of the world; they perform such extraordinary marvels and sorceries by diabolic art, that it astounds one to see or even hear of them. So I will relate none of them in this book of ours; people would be amazed if they heard them, but it would serve no good purpose.

These people of Tibet are an ill-conditioned race. They have mastiff dogs as big as donkeys, which are capital at seizing wild beasts [and in particular the wild oxen which are called *Beyamini*, very great and fierce

animals]. They have also sundry other kinds of sporting dogs, and excellent lanner falcons [and sakers], swift in flight and well-trained, which are got in the mountains of the country.

Now I have told you in brief all that is to be said about Tibet, and so we will leave it, and tell you about another province that is called Chantu.

As regards Tibet, however, you should understand that it is subject to the Great Khan. So, likewise, all the other kingdoms, regions, and provinces which are described in this book are subject to the Great Khan; nay, even those other kingdoms, regions, and provinces of which I had occasion to speak at the beginning of the book as belonging to the son of Arghun, the Lord of the Levant, are also subject to the Emperor; for the former holds his dominion of the Khan, and is his liegeman and kinsman of the blood Imperial. So you must know that from this province forward all the provinces mentioned in our book are subject to the Great Khan; and even if this be not specially mentioned, you must understand that it is so.

Now let us have done with this matter, and I will tell you about the Province of Chantu.

CHAPTER XLVII

Concerning the Province of Chantu

Chantu is a province lying towards the west, and there is only one king in it. The people are Idolaters, subject to the Great Khan, and they have plenty of towns and villages. [The chief city is also called Chantu, and stands at the upper end of the province.] There is a lake here, in which are found pearls [which are white but not round]. But the Great Khan will not allow them to be fished, for if people were to take as many as they could find there, the supply would be so vast that

pearls would lose their value, and come to be worth nothing. Only when it is his pleasure they take from the lake so many as he may desire; but any one attempting to take them on his own account would be incontinently put to death.

There is also a mountain in this country wherein they find a kind of stone called turquoise, in great abundance; and it is a very beautiful stone. These also the Emperor does not allow to be extracted without his special order.

I must tell you of a custom that they have in this country regarding their women. No man considers himself wronged if a foreigner, or any other man, dishonour his wife, or daughter, or sister, or any woman of his family, but on the contrary he deems such intercourse a piece of good fortune. And they say that it brings the favour of their gods and idols, and great increase of temporal prosperity. For this reason they bestow their wives on foreigners and other people as I will tell you.

When they fall in with any stranger in want of a lodging they are all eager to take him in. And as soon as he has taken up his quarters the master of the house goes forth, telling him to consider everything at his disposal, and after saying so he proceeds to his vineyards or his fields, and comes back no more till the stranger has departed. The latter abides in the caitiff's house, be it three days or be it four, enjoying himself with the fellow's wife or daughter or sister, or whatsoever woman of the family it best likes him; and as long as he abides there he leaves his hat or some other token hanging at the door, to let the master of the house know that he is still there. As long as the wretched fellow sees that token, he must not go in. And such is the custom over all that province.

The money matters of the people are conducted in this way. They have gold in rods which they weigh, and they reckon its value by its weight in *saggi*, but they have no coined money. Their small change again is

made in this way. They have salt which they boil and set in a mould [flat below and round above], and every piece from the mould weighs about half a pound. Now, 80 moulds of this salt are worth one *saggio* of fine gold, which is a weight so called. So this salt serves them for small change.

The musk animals are very abundant in that country, and thus of musk also they have great store. They have likewise plenty of fish which they catch in the lake in which the pearls are produced. Wild animals, such as lions, bears, wolves, stags, bucks and roes, exist in great numbers; and there are also vast quantities of fowl of every kind. Wine of the vine they have none, but they make a wine of wheat and rice and sundry good spices, and very good drink it is. There grows also in this country a quantity of clove. The tree that bears it is a small one, with leaves like laurel but longer and narrower, and with a small white flower like the clove. They have also ginger and cinnamon in great plenty, besides other spices which never reach our countries, so we need say nothing about them.

Now we may leave this province, as we have told you all about it. But let me tell you first of this same country of Chantu that you ride through it ten days, constantly meeting with towns and villages, with people of the same description that I have mentioned. After riding those ten days you come to a river valled Brius, which terminates the province of Chantu. In this river is found much gold-dust, and there is also much cinnamon on its banks. It flows to the Ocean Sea.

There is no more to be said about this river, so I will now tell you about another province called Karajang, as you shall hear in what follows.

CHAPTER XLVIII

Concerning the Province of Karajang

When you have passed that River you enter on the province of Karajang, which is so large that it includes seven kingdoms. It lies towards the west; the people are Idolaters, and they are subject to the Great Khan. A son of his, however, is there as King of the country, by name Essen-timur; a very great and rich and puissant Prince; and he well and justly rules his dominion, for he is a wise man, and a valiant.

After leaving the river that I spoke of, you go five days' journey towards the west, meeting with numerous towns and villages. The country is one in which excellent horses are bred, and the people live by cattle and agriculture. They have a language of their own which is passing hard to understand. At the end of those five days' journey you come to the capital, which is called Yachi, a very great and noble city, in which are numerous merchants and craftsmen.

The people are of sundry kinds, for there are not only Saracens and Idolaters, but also a few Nestorian Christians. They have wheat and rice in plenty. Howbeit they never eat wheaten bread, because in that country it is unwholesome. Rice they eat, and make of it sundry messes, besides a kind of drink which is very clear and good, and makes a man drunk just as wine does.

Their money is such as I will tell you. They use for the purpose certain white porcelain shells that are found in the sea, such as are sometimes put on dogs' collars; and 80 of these porcelain shells pass for a single weight of silver, equivalent to two Venice groats. Also eight such weights of silver count equal to one such weight of gold.

They have brine-wells in this country from which they make salt, and all the people of those parts make a living

by this salt. The King, too, I can assure you, gets a great revenue from this salt.

There is a lake in this country of a good hundred miles in compass, in which are found great quantities of the best fish in the world; fish of great size, and of all sorts.

They reckon it no matter for a man to have intimacy with another's wife, provided the woman be willing.

Let me tell you also that the people of that country eat their meat raw, whether it be of mutton, beef, buffalo, poultry, or any other kind. Thus the poor people will go to the shambles, and take the raw liver as it comes from the carcase and cut it small, and put it in a sauce of garlic and spices, and so eat it; and other meat in like manner, raw, just as we eat meat that is dressed.

Now I will tell you about a further part of the Province of Karajang, of which I have been speaking.

CHAPTER XLIX

Concerning a further part of the Province of Karajang

After leaving that city of Yachi of which I have been speaking, and travelling ten days towards the west, you come to another capital city which is still in the province of Karajang, and is itself called Karajang. The people are Idolaters and subject to the Great Khan; and the King is Hukaji, who is a son of the Great Khan.

In this country gold-dust is found in great quantities; that is to say in the rivers and lakes, whilst in the mountains gold is also found in pieces of larger size. Gold is indeed so abundant that they give one *saggio* of gold for only six of the same weight in silver. And for small change they use porcelain shells as I mentioned before. These are not found in the country, however, but are brought from India.

In this province are found snakes and great serpents of such vast size as to strike fear into those who see them, and so hideous that the very account of them must excite the wonder of those who hear it. I will tell you how long and big they are.

You may be assured that some of them are ten paces in length; some are more and some less. And in bulk they are equal to a great cask, for the bigger ones are about ten palms in girth. They have two forelegs near the head, but for foot nothing but a claw like the claw of a hawk or that of a lion. The head is very big, and the eyes are bigger than a great loaf of bread. The mouth is large enough to swallow a man whole, and is garnished with great [pointed] teeth. And in short they are so fierce-looking and so hideously ugly, that every man and beast must stand in fear and trembling of them. There are also smaller ones, such as of eight paces long, and of five, and of one pace only.

The way in which they are caught is this. You must know that by day they live underground because of the great heat, and in the night they go out to feed, and devour every animal they can catch. They go also to drink at the rivers and lakes and springs. And their weight is so great that when they travel in search of food or drink, as they do by night, the tail makes a great furrow in the soil as if a full ton of liquor had been dragged along. Now the huntsmen who go after them take them by certain gin which they set in the track over which the serpent has past, knowing that the beast will come back the same way. They plant a stake deep in the ground and fix on the head of this a sharp blade of steel made like a razor or a lance-point, and then they cover the whole with sand so that the serpent cannot see it. Indeed the huntsman plants several such stakes and blades on the track. On coming to the spot the beast strikes against the iron blade with such force that it enters his breast and rives him up to the navel, so that

he dies on the spot [and the crows on seeing the brute dead begin to caw, and then the huntsmen know that the serpent is dead and come in search of him].

This then is the way these beasts are taken. Those who take them proceed to extract the gall from the inside, and this sells at a great price; for you must know it furnishes the material for a most precious medicine. Thus if a person is bitten by a mad dog, and they give him but a small pennyweight of this medicine to drink, he is cured in a moment. Again if a woman is hard in labour they give her just such another dose and she is delivered at once. Yet again if one has any disease like the itch, or it may be worse, and applies a small quantity of this gall he shall speedily be cured. So you see why it sells at such a high price.

They also sell the flesh of this serpent, for it is excellent eating, and the people are very fond of it. And when these serpents are very hungry, sometimes they will seek out the lairs of lions or bears or other large wild beasts, and devour their cubs, without the sire and dam being able to prevent it. Indeed if they catch the big ones themselves they devour them too; they can make no resistance.

In this province also are bred large and excellent horses which are taken to India for sale. And you must know that the people dock two or three joints of the tail from their horses, to prevent them from flipping their riders, a thing which they consider very unseemly. They ride long like Frenchmen, and wear armour of boiled leather, and carry spears and shields and cross-bows, and all their arrows are poisoned. [And I was told as a fact that many persons, especially those meditating mischief, constantly carry this poison about with them, so that if by any chance they should be taken, and be threatened with torture, to avoid this they swallow the poison and so die speedily. But princes who are aware of this keep ready dog's dung, which they cause the

criminal instantly to swallow, to make him vomit the poison. And thus they manage to cure those scoundrels.]

I will tell you of a wicked thing they used to do before the Great Khan conquered them. If it chanced that a man of fine person or noble birth, or some other quality that recommended him, came to lodge with those people, then they would murder him by poison, or otherwise. And this they did, not for the sake of plunder, but because they believed that in this way the goodly favour and wisdom and repute of the murdered man would cleave to the house where he was slain. And in this manner many were murdered before the country was conquered by the Great Khan. But since his conquest, some 35 years ago, these crimes and this evil practice have prevailed no more; and this through dread of the Great Khan who will not permit such things.

CHAPTER L

Concerning the Province of Zardandan

When you have left Karajang and have travelled five days westward, you find a province called Zardandan. The people are Idolaters and subject to the Great Khan. The capital city is called Wanchen.

The people of this country all have their teeth gilt; or rather every man covers his teeth with a sort of golden case made to fit them, both the upper teeth and the under. The men do this, but not the women. [The men also are wont to gird their arms and legs with bands or fillets pricked in black, and it is done thus; they take five needles joined together, and with these they prick the flesh till the blood comes, and then they rub in a certain black colouring stuff, and this is perfectly indelible. It is considered a piece of elegance and the sign of gentility to have this black band.] The men are all gentlemen in their fashion, and do nothing but

go to the wars, or go hunting and hawking. The ladies do all the business, aided by the slaves who have been taken in war.

And when one of their wives has been delivered of a child, the infant is washed and swathed, and then the woman gets up and goes about her household affairs, whilst the husband takes to bed with the child by his side, and so keeps his bed for 40 days; and all the kith and kin come to visit him and keep up a great festivity. They do this because, say they, the woman has had a hard bout of it, and 'tis but fair the man should have his share of suffering.

They eat all kinds of meat, both raw and cooked, and they eat rice with their cooked meat as their fashion is. Their drink is wine made of rice and spices, and excellent it is. Their money is gold, and for small change they use pig-shells. And I can tell you they give one weight of gold for only five of silver; for there is no silver mine within five months' journey. And this induces merchants to go thither carrying a large supply of silver to change among that people. And as they have only five weights of silver to give for one of fine gold, they make immense profits by their exchange business in that country.

These people have neither idols nor churches, but worship the progenitor of their family, "for 'tis he," say they, "from whom we have all sprung." They have no letters or writing; and 'tis no wonder, for the country is wild and hard of access, full of great woods and mountains which 'tis impossible to pass, the air in summer is so impure and bad; and any foreigners attempting it would die for certain. When these people have any business transactions with one another, they take a piece of stick, round or square, and split it, each taking half. And on either half they cut two or three notches. And when the account is settled the debtor receives back the other half of the stick from the creditor.

And let me tell you that in all those three provinces that I have been speaking of, to wit Karajang, Wanchen, and Yachi, there is never a leech. But when any one is ill they send for their magicians, that is to say the Devil-conjurors and those who are the keepers of the idols. When these are come the sick man tells what ails him, and then the conjurors incontinently begin playing on their instruments and singing and dancing; and the conjurors dance to such a pitch that at last one of them shall fall to the ground lifeless, like a dead man. And then the devil entereth into his body. And when his comrades see him in this plight they begin to put questions to him about the sick man's ailment. And he will reply: "Such or such a spirit hath been meddling with the man, for that he hath angered the spirit and done it some despite." Then they say: "We pray thee to pardon him, and to take of his blood or of his goods what thou wilt in consideration of thus restoring him to health." And when they have so prayed, the malignant spirit that is in the body of the prostrate man will (mayhap) answer: "The sick man hath also done great despite unto such another spirit, and that one is so ill-disposed that it will not pardon him on any account;"—this at least is the answer they get, an the patient be like to die. But if he is to get better the answer will be that they are to bring two sheep, or may be three; and to brew ten or twelve jars of drink, very costly and abundantly spiced. Moreover it shall be announced that the sheep must be all black-faced, or of some other particular colour as it may hap; and then all those things are to be offered in sacrifice to such and such a spirit whose name is given. And they are to bring so many conjurors, and so many ladies, and the business is to be done with a great singing of lauds, and with many lights, and store of good perfumes. That is the sort of answer they get if the patient is to get well. And then the kinsfolk of the sick man go and procure all that has been com-

manded, and do as has been bidden, and the conjuror who had uttered all that gets on his legs again.

So they fetch the sheep of the colour prescribed, and slaughter them, and sprinkle the blood over such places as have been enjoined, in honour and propitiation of the spirit. And the conjurors come, and the ladies, in the number that was ordered, and when all are assembled and everything is ready, they begin to dance and play and sing in honour of the spirit. And they take flesh-broth and drink and lign-aloes, and a great number of lights, and go about thither and hither, scattering the broth and the drink and the meat also. And when they have done this for a while, again shall one of the conjurors fall flat and wallow there foaming at the mouth, and then the others will ask if he have yet pardoned the sick man? And sometimes he shall answer yea! and sometimes he shall answer no! And if the answer be *no*, they shall be told that something or other has to be done all over again, and then he will be pardoned; so this they do. And when all that the spirit has commanded has been done with great ceremony, then it shall be announced that the man is pardoned and shall be speedily cured. So when they at length receive such a reply, they announce that it is all made up with the spirit, and that he is propitiated, and they fall to eating and drinking with great joy and mirth, and he who had been lying lifeless on the ground gets up and takes his share. So when they have all eaten and drunken, every man departs home. And presently the sick man gets sound and well.

Now that I have told you of the customs and naughty ways of that people, we will have done talking of them and their province, and I will tell you about others, all in regular order and succession.

CHAPTER LI

Wherein is related how the King of Mien and Bengal vowed vengeance against the Great Khan

But I was forgetting to tell you of a famous battle that was fought in the kingdom of Wanchen in the Province of Zardandan, and that ought not to be omitted from our Book. So we will relate all the particulars.

You see, in the year of Christ 1277, the Great Khan sent a large force into the kingdoms of Karajang and Wanchen, to protect them from the ravages of ill-disposed people; and this was before he had sent any of his sons to rule the country, as he did afterwards when he made Essen-timur king there, the son of a son of his who was deceased.

Now there was a certain king, called the king of Mien and of Bengal, who was a very puissant prince, with much territory and treasure and people; and he was not as yet subject to the Great Khan, though it was not long after that the latter conquered him and took from him both the kingdoms that I have named. And it came to pass that when this king of Mien and Bengal heard that the host of the Great Khan was at Wanchen, he said to himself that it behoved him to go against them with so great a force as should insure his cutting off the whole of them, insomuch that the Great Khan would be very sorry ever to send an army again thither [to his frontier].

So this king prepared a great force and munitions of war; and he had, let me tell you, 2000 great elephants, on each of which was set a tower of timber, well framed and strong, and carrying from twelve to sixteen well-armed fighting men. And besides these, he had of horsemen and of footmen good 60,000 men. In short, he equipped a fine force, as well befitted such a puissant prince. It was indeed a host capable of doing great things.

And what shall I tell you? When the king had completed these great preparations to fight the Tartars, he tarried not, but straightway marched against them. And after advancing without meeting with anything worth mentioning, they arrived within three days of the Great Khan's host, which was then at Wanchen in the territory of Zardandan, of which I have already spoken. So there the king pitched his camp, and halted to refresh his army.

CHAPTER LII

Of the Battle that was fought by the Great Khan's Host and his Seneschal against the King of Mien

And when the Captain of the Tartar host had certain news that the king aforesaid was coming against him with so great a force, he waxed uneasy, seeing that he had with him but 12,000 horsemen. Natheless he was a most valiant and able soldier, of great experience in arms and an excellent Captain; and his name was Nasr-uddin. His troops too were very good, and he gave them very particular orders and cautions how to act, and took every measure for his own defence and that of his army. And why should I make a long story of it? The whole force of the Tartars, consisting of 12,000 well-mounted horsemen, advanced to receive the enemy in the Plain of Wanchen, and there they waited to give them battle. And this they did through the good judgment of the excellent Captain who led them; for hard by that plain was a great wood, thick with trees. And so there in the plain the Tartars awaited their foe. Let us then leave discoursing of them a while; we shall come back to them presently; but meantime let us speak of the enemy.

After the King of Mien had halted long enough to refresh his troops, he resumed his march, and came to the Plain of Wanchen, where the Tartars were already

in order of battle. And when the king's army had arrived in the plain, and was within a mile of the enemy, he caused all the castles that were on the elephants to be ordered for battle, and the fighting men to take up their posts on them, and he arrayed his horse and his foot with all skill, like a wise king as he was. And when he had completed all his arrangements he began to advance to engage the enemy. The Tartars, seeing the foe advance, showed no dismay, but came on likewise with good order and discipline to meet them. And when they were near and nought remained but to begin the fight, the horses of the Tartars took such fright at the sight of the elephants that they could not be got to face the foe, but always swerved and turned back; whilst all the time the king and his forces, and all his elephants, continued to advance upon them.

And when the Tartars perceived how the case stood, they were in great wrath, and wist not what to say or do; for well enough they saw that unless they could get their horses to advance, all would be lost. But their Captain acted like a wise leader who had considered everything beforehand. He immediately gave orders that every man should dismount and tie his horse to the trees of the forest that stood hard by, and that then they should take to their bows, a weapon that they know how to handle better than any troops in the world. They did as he bade them, and plied their bows stoutly, shooting so many shafts at the advancing elephants that in a short space they had wounded or slain the greater part of them as well as of the men they carried. The enemy also shot at the Tartars, but the Tartars had the better weapons, and were the better archers to boot.

And what shall I tell you? Understand that when the elephants felt the smart of those arrows that pelted them like rain, they turned tail and fled, and nothing on earth would have induced them to turn and face the Tartars. So off they sped with such a noise and up-

roar that you would have trowed the world was coming to an end! And then too they plunged into the wood and rushed this way and that, dashing their castles against the trees, bursting their harness and smashing and destroying everything that was on them.

So when the Tartars saw that the elephants had turned tail and could not be brought to face the fight again, they got to horse at once and charged the enemy. And then the battle began to rage furiously with sword and mace. Right fiercely did the two hosts rush together, and deadly were the blows exchanged. The king's troops were far more in number than the Tartars, but they were not of such metal, nor so inured to war; otherwise the Tartars who were so few in number could never have stood against them. Then might you see swashing blows dealt and taken from sword and mace; then might you see knights and horses and men-at-arms go down; then might you see arms and hands and legs and heads hewn off; and besides the dead that fell, many a wounded man, that never rose again, for the sore press there was. The din and uproar were so great from this side and from that, that God might have thundered and no man would have heard it! Great was the medley, and dire and parlous was the fight that was fought on both sides; but the Tartars had the best of it.

In an ill hour indeed, for the king and his people, was that battle begun, so many of them were slain therein. And when they had continued fighting till midday the king's troops could stand against the Tartars no longer; but felt that they were defeated, and turned and fled. And when the Tartars saw them routed they gave chase, and hacked and slew so mercilessly that it was a piteous sight to see. But after pursuing a while they gave up, and returned to the wood to catch the elephants that had run away, and to manage this they had to cut down great trees to bar their passage. Even then they would not have been able to take them without the help of the

king's own men who had been taken, and who knew better how to deal with the beasts than the Tartars did. The elephant is an animal that hath more wit than any other; but in this way at last they were caught, more than 200 of them. And it was from this time forth that the Great Khan began to keep numbers of elephants.

So thus it was that the king aforesaid was defeated by the sagacity and superior skill of the Tartars as you have heard.

CHAPTER LIII

Of the Great Descent that leads towards the Kingdom of Mien

After leaving the Province of which I have been speaking you come to a great Descent. In fact you ride for two days and a half continually down hill. On all this descent there is nothing worthy of mention except only that there is a large place there where occasionally a great market is held; for all the people of the country round come thither on fixed days, three times a week, and hold a market there. They exchange gold for silver; for they have gold in abundance; and they give one weight of fine gold for five weights of fine silver; so this induces merchants to come from various quarters bringing silver which they exchange for gold with these people; and in this way the merchants make great gain. As regards those people of the country who dispose of gold so cheaply, you must understand that nobody is acquainted with their places of abode, for they dwell in inaccessible positions, in sites so wild and strong that no one can get at them to meddle with them. Nor will they allow anybody to accompany them so as to gain a knowledge of their abodes.

After you have ridden those two days and a half down hill, you find yourself in a province towards the south which is pretty near to India, and this province is called Amien. You travel therein for fifteen days through

a very unfrequented country, and through great woods abounding in elephants and unicorns and numbers of other wild beasts. There are no dwellings and no people, so we need say no more of this wild country, for in sooth there is nothing to tell. But I have a story to relate which you shall now hear.

CHAPTER LIV

Concerning the City of Mien, and the Two Towers that are therein, one of Gold and the other of Silver

And when you have travelled those 15 days through such a difficult country as I have described, in which travellers have to carry provisions for the road because there are no inhabitants, then you arrive at the capital city of this Province of Mien, and it also is called Amien, and is a very great and noble city. The people are Idolaters and have a peculiar language, and are subject to the Great Khan.

And in this city there is a thing so rich and rare that I must tell you about it. You see there was in former days a rich and puissant king in this city, and when he was about to die he commanded that by his tomb they should erect two towers [one at either end], one of gold and the other of silver, in such fashion as I shall tell you. The towers are built of fine stone; and then one of them has been covered with gold a good finger in thickness, so that the tower looks as if it were all of solid gold; and the other is covered with silver in like manner so that it seems to be all of solid silver. Each tower is a good ten paces in height and of breadth in proportion. The upper part of these towers is round, and girt all about with bells, the top of the gold tower with gilded bells and the silver tower with silvered bells, insomuch that whenever the wind blows among these bells they

tinkle. [The tomb likewise was plated partly with gold, and partly with silver.] The King caused these towers to be erected to commemorate his magnificence and for the good of his soul; and really they do form one of the finest sights in the world; so exquisitely finished are they, so splendid and costly. And when they are lighted up by the sun they shine most brilliantly and are visible from a vast distance.

Now you must know that the Great Khan conquered the country in this fashion.

You see at the Court of the Great Khan there was a great number of gleemen and jugglers; and he said to them one day that he wanted them to go and conquer the aforesaid province of Mien, and that he would give them a good Captain to lead them and other good aid. And they replied that they would be delighted. So the Emperor caused them to be fitted out with all that an army requires, and gave them a Captain and a body of men-at-arms to help them; and so they set out, and marched until they came to the country and province of Mien. And they did conquer the whole of it! And when they found in the city the two towers of gold and silver of which I have been telling you, they were greatly astonished, and sent word thereof to the Great Khan, asking what he would have them do with the two towers, seeing what a great quantity of wealth there was upon them. And the Great Khan, being well aware that the King had caused these towers to be made for the good of his soul, and to preserve his memory after his death, said that he would not have them injured, but would have them left precisely as they were. And that was no wonder either, for you must know that no Tartar in the world will ever, if he can help it, lay hand on anything appertaining to the dead.

They have in this province numbers of elephants and wild oxen; also beautiful stags and deer and roe, and other kinds of large game in plenty.

Now having told you about the province of Mien, I will tell you about another province which is called Bengal, as you shall hear presently.

CHAPTER LV

Concerning the Province of Bengal

Bengal is a Province towards the south, which up to the year 1290, when the aforesaid Messer Marco Polo was still at the Court of the Great Khan, had not yet been conquered; but his armies had gone thither to make the conquest. You must know that this province has a peculiar language, and that the people are wretched Idolaters. They are tolerably close to India. There are numbers of eunuchs there, insomuch that all the Barons who keep them get them from that Province.

The people have oxen as tall as elephants, but not so big. They live on flesh and milk and rice. They grow cotton, in which they drive a great trade, and also spices such as spikenard, galingale, ginger, sugar, and many other sorts. And the people of India also come thither in search of the eunuchs that I mentioned, and of slaves, male and female, of which there are great numbers, taken from other provinces with which those of the country are at war; and these eunuchs and slaves are sold to the Indian and other merchants who carry them thence for sale about the world.

There is nothing more to mention about this country, so we will quit it, and I will tell you of another province called Kafche-kué.

CHAPTER LVI

Discourses of the Province of Kafche-kué

Kafche-kué is a province towards the east, which has a king. The people are Idolaters, and have a language of their own. They have made their submission to the Great Khan, and send him tribute every year. And let me tell you their king is so given to luxury that he hath at the least 300 wives; for whenever he hears of any beautiful woman in the land, he takes and marries her.

They find in this country a good deal of gold, and they also have great abundance of spices. But they are such a long way from the sea that the products are of little value, and thus their price is low. They have elephants in great numbers, and other cattle of sundry kinds, and plenty of game. They live on flesh and milk and rice, and have wine made of rice and good spices. The whole of the people, or nearly so, have their skin marked with the needle in patterns representing lions, dragons, birds, and what not, done in such a way that it can never be obliterated. This work they cause to be wrought over face and neck and chest, arms and hands, and belly, and, in short, the whole body; and they look on it as a token of elegance, so that those who have the largest amount of this embroidery are regarded with the greatest admiration.

CHAPTER LVII

Concerning the Province of Anin

Anin is a Province towards the east, the people of which are subject to the Great Khan, and are Idolaters. They live by cattle and tillage, and have a peculiar language. The women wear on the legs and arms bracelets of gold and silver of great value, and the men wear such as are

even yet more costly. They have plenty of horses which they sell in great numbers to the Indians, making a great profit thereby. And they have also vast herds of buffaloes and oxen, having excellent pastures for these. They have likewise all the necessaries of life in abundance.

Now you must know that between Anin and Kafche-kué, which we have left behind us, there is a distance of [25] days' journey; and from Kafche-kué to Bengal, the third province in our rear, is 30 days' journey. We shall now leave Anin and proceed to another province which is some 8 days' journey further, always going eastward.

CHAPTER LVIII

Concerning the Province of Toloman

Toloman is a province towards the east, the people of which are Idolaters and have a peculiar language, and are subject to the Great Khan. They are a [tall and] very handsome people, though in complexion brown rather than white, and are good soldiers. They have a good many towns, and a vast number of villages, among great mountains, and in strong positions.

When any of them die, the bodies are burnt, and then they take the bones and put them in little chests. These are carried high up the mountains, and placed in great caverns, where they are hung up in such wise that neither man nor beast can come at them.

A good deal of gold is found in the country, and for petty traffic they use porcelain shells such as I have told you of before. All these provinces that I have been speaking of, to wit Bengal and Kafche-kué and Anin, employ for currency porcelain shells and gold. There are merchants in this country who are very rich and dispose of large quantities of goods. The people live on flesh and rice and milk, and brew their wine from rice and excellent spices.

CHAPTER LIX

Concerning the Province of Kwei-chau

Kwei-chau is a province towards the East. After leaving Toloman you travel along a river for 12 days, meeting with a good number of towns and villages, but nothing worthy of particular mention. After you have travelled those twelve days along the river you come to a great and noble city which is called Fungul.

The people are Idolaters and subject to the Great Khan, and live by trade and handicrafts. You must know they manufacture stuffs of the bark of certain trees which form very fine summer clothing. They are good soldiers, and have paper-money. For you must understand that henceforward we are in the countries where the Great Khan's paper-money is current.

The country swarms with lions to that degree that no man can venture to sleep outside his house at night. Moreover, when you travel on that river, and come to a halt at night, unless you keep a good way from the bank the lions will spring on the boat and snatch one of the crew and make off with him and devour him. And but for a certain help that the inhabitants enjoy, no one could venture to travel in that province, because of the multitude of those lions, and because of their strength and ferocity.

But you see they have in this province a large breed of dogs, so fierce and bold that two of them together will attack a lion. So every man who goes a journey takes with him a couple of those dogs, and when a lion appears they have at him with the greatest boldness, and the lion turns on them but can't touch them, for they are very deft at eschewing his blows. So they follow him, perpetually giving tongue, and watching their chance to give him a bite in the rump or in the thigh, or wherever they may. The lion makes no reprisal except now and then to turn fiercely on them, and then indeed were he to

catch the dogs it would be all over with them, but they take good care that he shall not. So, to escape the dogs' din, the lion makes off, and gets into the wood, where mayhap he stands at bay against a tree to have his rear protected from their annoyance. And when the travellers see the lion in this plight they take to their bows, for they are capital archers, and shoot their arrows at him till he falls dead. And 'tis thus that travellers in those parts do deliver themselves from those lions.

They have a good deal of silk and other products which are carried up and down, by the river of which we spoke, into various quarters.

You travel along the river for twelve days more, finding a good many towns all along, and the people always Idolaters, and subject to the Great Khan, with paper-money current, and living by trade and handicrafts. There are also plenty of fighting men. And after travelling those twelve days you arrive at the city of Cheng-tu-fu of which we spoke in this book some time ago.

From Cheng-tu-fu you set out again and travel some 70 days through the provinces and cities and towns which we have already visited, and all which have been already particularly spoken of in our Book. At the end of those 70 days you come to Cho-chau where we were before.

From Cho-chau you set out again and travel four days towards the south, finding many towns and villages. The people are great traders and craftsmen, are all Idolaters, and use the paper-money of the Great Khan their Sovereign. At the end of those four days you come to the city of Ho-kien-fu belonging to the province of Cathay, and of it I shall now speak.

Part III.—JOURNEY SOUTHWARD THROUGH EASTERN PROVINCES OF CATHAY AND MANZI

Part III.—JOURNEY SOUTHWARD THROUGH EASTERN PROVINCES OF CATHAY AND MANZI

CHAPTER LX

Concerning the Cities of Ho-kien-fu and of Chang-lu

Ho-kien-fu is a noble city. The people are Idolaters and burn their dead; they have paper-money, and live by trade and handicrafts. For they have plenty of silk from which they weave stuffs of silk and gold, and sendals in large quantities. [There are also certain Christians at this place, who have a church.] And the city is at the head of an important territory containing numerous towns and villages. [A great river passes through it, on which much merchandize is carried to the city of Cambaluc, for by many channels and canals it is connected therewith.]

We will now set forth again, and travel three days towards the south, and then we come to a town called Chang-lu. This is another great city belonging to the Great Khan, and to the province of Cathay. The people have paper-money, and are Idolaters and burn their dead. And you must know they make salt in great quantities at this place; I will tell you how 'tis done.

A kind of earth is found there which is exceedingly salt. This they dig up and pile in great heaps. Upon these heaps they pour water in quantities till it runs out at the bottom; and then they take up this water and boil it well in great iron cauldrons, and as it cools it deposits a fine white salt in very small grains. This salt they then carry about for sale to many neighbouring districts, and get great profit thereby.

There is nothing else worth mentioning, so let us go forward five days' journey, and we shall come to a city called Tsi-nan-fu.

CHAPTER LXI

Concerning the City of Tsi-nan-fu, and that of Tai-ting-fu, and the Rebellion of Litan

Tsi-nan-fu is a city of Cathay as you go south, and it belongs to the Great Khan; the people are Idolaters, and have paper-money. There runs through the city a great and wide river, on which a large traffic in silk goods and spices and other costly merchandize passes up and down.

When you travel south from Tsi-nan-fu for five days, you meet everywhere with fine towns and villages, the people of which are all Idolaters, and burn their dead, and are subject to the Great Khan, and have paper-money, and live by trade and handicrafts, and have all the necessaries of life in great abundance. But there is nothing particular to mention on the way till you come, at the end of those five days, to Tai-ting-fu.

This, you must know, is a very great city, and in old times was the seat of a great kingdom; but the Great Khan conquered it by force of arms. Nevertheless it is still the noblest city in all those provinces. There are very great merchants here, who trade on a great scale, and the abundance of silk is something marvellous. They have, moreover, most charming gardens abounding with fruit of large size. The city of Tai-ting-fu hath also under its rule eleven imperial cities of great importance, all of which enjoy a large and profitable trade, owing to that immense produce of silk.

Now, you must know, that in the year of Christ 1262, the Great Khan had sent a certain Baron called Litan Sangon, with some 80,000 horse, to this province and city, to garrison them. And after the said captain had tarried there a while, he formed a disloyal and traitorous

plot, and stirred up the great men of the province to rebel against the Great Khan. And so they did; for they broke into revolt against their sovereign lord, and refused all obedience to him, and made this Litan, whom their sovereign had sent thither for their protection, to be the chief of their revolt.

When the Great Khan heard thereof he straightway despatched two of his Barons, one of whom was called Agul and the other Mangutai; giving them 100,000 horse and a great force of infantry. But the affair was a serious one, for the Barons were met by the rebel Litan with all those whom he had collected from the province, mustering more than 100,000 horse and a large force of foot. Nevertheless in the battle Litan and his party were utterly routed, and the two Barons whom the Emperor had sent won the victory. When the news came to the Great Khan he was right well pleased, and ordered that all the chiefs who had rebelled, or excited others to rebel, should be put to a cruel death, but that those of lower rank should receive a pardon. And so it was done. The two Barons had all the leaders of the enterprise put to a cruel death, and all those of lower rank were pardoned. And thenceforward they conducted themselves with loyalty towards their lord.

Now having told you all about this affair, let us have done with it, and I will tell you of another place that you come to in going south, which is called Tsi-ning-chau.

CHAPTER LXII

Concerning the noble City of Tsi-ning-chau

On leaving Tai-ting-fu you travel three days towards the south, always finding numbers of noble and populous towns and villages flourishing with trade and manufactures. There is also abundance of game in the country, and everything in profusion.

When you have travelled those three days you come to the noble city of Tsi-ning-chau, a rich and fine place, with great trade and manufactures. The people are Idolaters and subjects of the Great Khan, and have paper-money, and they have a river which I can assure you brings them great gain, and I will tell you about it.

You see the river in question flows from the South to this city of Tsi-ning-chau. And the people of the city have divided this larger river in two, making one half of it flow east and the other half flow west; that is to say, the one branch flows towards Manzi and the other towards Cathay. And it is a fact that the number of vessels at this city is what no one would believe without seeing them. The quantity of merchandize also which these vessels transport to Manzi and Cathay is something marvellous; and then they return loaded with other merchandize, so that the amount of goods borne to and fro on those two rivers is quite astonishing.

CHAPTER LXIII

Concerning the Cities of Lin-ching and Pei-chau

On leaving the city of Tsi-ning-chau you travel for eight days towards the south, always coming to great and rich towns and villages flourishing with trade and manufactures. The people are all subjects of the Great Khan, use paper-money, and burn their dead. At the end of those eight days you come to the city of Lin-ching, in the province of the same name of which it is the capital. It is a rich and noble city, and the men are good soldiers, natheless they carry on great trade and manufactures. There is great abundance of game in both beasts and birds, and all the necessaries of life are in profusion. The place stands on the river of which I told you above. And they have here great numbers of vessels, even greater

than those of which I spoke before, and these transport a great amount of costly merchandize.

So, quitting this province and city of Lin-ching, you travel three days more towards the south, constantly finding numbers of rich towns and villages. These still belong to Cathay; and the people are all Idolaters, burning their dead, and using paper-money, that I mean of their Lord the Great Khan, whose subjects they are. This is the finest country for game, whether in beasts or birds, that is anywhere to be found, and all the necessaries of life are in profusion.

At the end of those three days you find the city of Pei-chau, a great, rich, and noble city, with large trade and manufactures, and a great production of silk. This city stands at the entrance to the great province of Manzi, and there reside at it a great number of merchants who despatch carts from this place loaded with great quantities of goods to the different towns of Manzi. The city brings in a great revenue to the Great Khan.

CHAPTER LXIV

Concerning the City of Si-chau, and the Great River Karamuren

When you leave Pei-chau you travel towards the south for two days, through beautiful districts abounding in everything, and in which you find quantities of all kinds of game. At the end of those two days you reach the city of Si-chau, a great, rich, and noble city, flourishing with trade and manufactures. The people are Idolaters, burn their dead, use paper-money, and are subjects of the Great Khan. They possess extensive and fertile plains producing abundance of wheat and other grain. But there is nothing else to mention, so let us proceed and tell you of the countries further on.

On leaving Si-chau you ride south for three days, con-

stantly falling in with fine towns and villages and hamlets and farms, with their cultivated lands. There is plenty of wheat and other corn, and of game also; and the people are all Idolaters and subjects of the Great Khan.

At the end of those three days you reach the great river KARAMUREN, which flows hither from Prester John's country. It is a great river, and more than a mile in width, and so deep that great ships can navigate it. It abounds in fish, and very big ones too. You must know that in this river there are some 15,000 vessels, all belonging to the Great Khan, and kept to transport his troops to the Indian Isles whenever there may be occasion; for the sea is only one day distant from the place we are speaking of. And each of these vessels, taking one with another, will require 20 mariners, and will carry 15 horses with the men belonging to them, and their provisions, arms, and equipments.

Hither and thither, on either bank of the river, stands a town; the one facing the other. The one is called HWAI-NGAN-CHAU and the other KWA-CHAU; the former is a large place, and the latter a little one. And when you pass this river you enter the great province of MANZI. So now I must tell you how this province of Manzi was conquered by the Great Khan.

CHAPTER LXV

How the Great Khan conquered the Province of Manzi

You must know that there was a King and Sovereign lord of the great territory of Manzi who was styled FACFUR, so great and puissant a prince, that for vastness of wealth and number of subjects and extent of dominion, there was hardly a greater in all the earth except the Great Khan himself. But the people of his land were anything rather than warriors; all their delight was in

women, and nought but women; and so it was above all with the King himself, for he took thought of nothing else but women, unless it were of charity to the poor.

In all his dominion there were no horses; nor were the people ever inured to battle or arms, or military service of any kind. Yet the province of Manzi is very strong by nature, and all the cities are encompassed by sheets of water of great depth, and more than a crossbow-shot in width; so that the country never would have been lost, had the people but been soldiers. But that is just what they were not; so lost it was.

Now it came to pass, in the year of Christ's incarnation, 1268, that the Great Khan, the same that now reigneth, despatched thither a Baron of his whose name was BAYAN CHING-SIANG, which is as much as to say "Bayan Hundred Eyes." And you must know that the King of Manzi had found in his horoscope that he never should lose his Kingdom except through a man that had an hundred eyes; so he held himself assured in his position, for he could not believe that any man in existence could have an hundred eyes. There, however, he deluded himself, in his ignorance of the name of Bayan.

This Bayan had an immense force of horse and foot entrusted to him by the Great Khan, and with these he entered Manzi, and he had also a great number of boats to carry both horse and food when need should be. And when he, with all his host, entered the territory of Manzi and arrived at this city of HWAI-NGAN-CHAU—whither we now are got, and of which we shall speak presently—he summoned the people thereof to surrender to the Great Khan; but this they flatly refused. On this Bayan went on to another city, with the same result, and then still went forward; acting thus because he was aware that the Great Khan was despatching another great host to follow him up.

What shall I say then? He advanced to five cities in succession, but got possession of none of them; for he

did not wish to engage in besieging them and they would not give themselves up. But when he came to the sixth city he took that by storm, and so with a second, and a third, and a fourth, until he had taken twelve cities in succession. And when he had taken all these he advanced straight against the capital city of the kingdom, which was called KINSAY, and which was the residence of the King and Queen.

And when the King beheld Bayan coming with all his host, he was in great dismay, as one unused to see such sights. So he and a great company of his people got on board a thousand ships and fled to the islands of the Ocean Sea, whilst the Queen who remained behind in the city took all measures in her power for its defence, like a valiant lady.

Now it came to pass that the Queen asked what was the name of the captain of the host, and they told her that it was Bayan Hundred-Eyes. So when she wist that he was styled Hundred-Eyes, she called to mind how their astrologers had foretold that a man of an hundred eyes should strip them of the kingdom. Wherefore she gave herself up to Bayan, and surrendered to him the whole kingdom and all the other cities and fortresses, so that no resistance was made. And in sooth this was a goodly conquest, for there was no realm on earth half so wealthy. The amount that the King used to expend was perfectly marvellous; and as an example I will tell you somewhat of his liberal acts.

In those provinces they are wont to expose their newborn babes; I speak of the poor, who have not the means of bringing them up. But the King used to have all those foundlings taken charge of, and had note made of the signs and planets under which each was born, and then put them out to nurse about the country. And when any rich man was childless he would go to the King and obtain from him as many of these children as he desired. Or, when the children grew up, the King

would make up marriages among them, and provide for the couples from his own purse. In this manner he used to provide for some 20,000 boys and girls every year.

I will tell you another thing this King used to do. If he was taking a ride through the city and chanced to see a house that was very small and poor standing among other houses that were fine and large, he would ask why it was so, and they would tell him it belonged to a poor man who had not the means to enlarge it. Then the King would himself supply the means. And thus it came to pass that in all the capital of the kingdom of Manzi, Kinsay by name, you should not see any but fine houses.

This King used to be waited on by more than a thousand young gentlemen and ladies, all clothed in the richest fashion. And he ruled his realm with such justice that no malefactors were to be found therein. The city in fact was so secure that no man closed his doors at night, not even in houses and shops that were full of all sorts of rich merchandize. No one could do justice in the telling to the great riches of that country, and to the good disposition of the people. Now that I have told you about the kingdom, I will go back to the Queen.

You must know that she was conducted to the Great Khan, who gave her an honourable reception, and caused her to be served with all state, like a great lady as she was. But as for the King her husband, he never more did quit the isles of the sea to which he had fled, but died there. So leave we him and his wife and all their concerns, and let us return to our story, and go on regularly with our account of the great province of Manzi and of the manners and customs of its people. And, to begin at the beginning, we must go back to the city of Hwaingan-chau, from which we digressed to tell you about the conquest of Manzi.

CHAPTER LXVI

Concerning the City of Hwai-ngan-chau

Hwai-ngan-chau is, as I have told you already, a very large city standing at the entrance to Manzi. The people are Idolaters and burn their dead, and are subject to the Great Khan. They have a vast amount of shipping, as I mentioned before in speaking of the River Karamuren. And an immense quantity of merchandize comes hither, for the city is the seat of government for this part of the country. Owing to its being on the river, many cities send their produce thither to be again thence distributed in every direction. A great amount of salt also is made here, furnishing some forty other cities with that article, and bringing in a large revenue to the Great Khan.

CHAPTER LXVII

Of the Cities of Pao-Ying and Kau-yu

When you leave Hwai-ngan-chau you ride south-east for a day along a causeway laid with fine stone, which you find at this entrance to Manzi. On either hand there is a great expanse of water, so that you cannot enter the province except along this causeway. At the end of the day's journey you reach the fine city of Pao-Ying. The people are Idolaters, burn their dead, are subject to the Great Khan, and use paper-money. They live by trade and manufactures and have great abundance of silk, whereof they weave a great variety of fine stuffs of silk and gold. Of all the necessaries of life there is great store.

When you leave Pao-Ying you ride another day to the south-east, and then you arrive at the city of Kau-yu. The people are Idolaters (and so forth). They live by trade and manufactures and have great store of all

necessaries, including fish in great abundance. There is also much game, both beast and bird, insomuch that for a Venice groat you can have three good pheasants.

CHAPTER LXVIII

Of the Cities of Tai-chau, Tung-chau, and Yang-chau

When you leave Kau-yu, you ride another day to the south-east through a constant succession of villages and fields and fine farms until you come to Tai-chau, which is a city of no great size but abounding in everything. The people are Idolaters (and so forth). There is a great amount of trade, and they have many vessels. And you must know that on your left hand, that is towards the east, and three days' journey distant, is the Ocean Sea. At every place between the sea and the city salt is made in great quantities. And there is a rich and noble city called Tung-chau, at which there is produced salt enough to supply the whole province, and I can tell you it brings the Great Khan an incredible revenue. The people are Idolaters and subject to the Khan. Let us quit this, however, and go back to Tai-chau.

Again, leaving Tai-chau, you ride another day towards the south-east, and at the end of your journey you arrive at the very great and noble city of Yang-chau, which has seven-and-twenty other wealthy cities under its administration; so that this Yang-chau is, you see, a city of great importance. It is the seat of one of the Great Khan's Twelve Barons, for it has been chosen to be one of the Twelve *Sings*. The people are Idolaters and use paper-money, and are subject to the Great Khan. And Messer Marco Polo himself, of whom this book speaks, did govern this city for three full years, by the order of the Great Khan. The people live by trade and manufactures, for a great amount of harness for knights and men-at-arms is made there. And in this city and its

neighbourhood a large number of troops are stationed by the Khan's orders.

There is no more to say about it. So now I will tell you about two great provinces of Manzi which lie towards the west. And first of that called Ngan-king.

CHAPTER LXIX

Concerning the City of Ngan-king

Ngan-king is a very noble Province towards the west. The people are Idolaters (and so forth) and live by trade and manufactures. They have silk in great abundance, and they weave many fine tissues of silk and gold. They have all sorts of corn and victuals very cheap, for the province is a most productive one. Game also is abundant, and lions too are found there. The merchants are great and opulent, and the Emperor draws a large revenue from them, in the shape of duties on the goods which they buy and sell.

And now I will tell you of the very noble city of Siang-yang-fu, which well deserves a place in our book, for there is a matter of great moment to tell about it.

CHAPTER LXX

Concerning the very noble City of Siang-yang-fu, and how its Capture was effected

Siang-yang-fu is a very great and noble city, and it rules over twelve other large and rich cities, and is itself a seat of great trade and manufacture. The people are Idolaters (and so forth). They have much silk, from which they weave fine silken stuffs; they have also a quantity of game, and in short the city abounds in all that it behoves a noble city to possess.

Now you must know that this city held out against

the Great Khan for three years after the rest of Manzi had surrendered. The Great Khan's troops made incessant attempts to take it, but they could not succeed because of the great and deep waters that were round about it, so that they could approach from one side only, which was the north. And I tell you they never would have taken it, but for a circumstance that I am going to relate.

You must know that when the Great Khan's host had lain three years before the city without being able to take it, they were greatly chafed thereat. Then Messer Nicolo Polo and Messer Maffeo and Messer Marco said: "We could find you a way of forcing the city to surrender speedily;" whereupon those of the army replied, that they would be right glad to know how that should be. All this talk took place in the presence of the Great Khan. For messengers had been despatched from the camp to tell him that there was no taking the city by blockade, for it continually received supplies of victual from those sides which they were unable to invest; and the Great Khan had sent back word that take it they must, and find a way how. Then spoke up the two brothers and Messer Marco the son, and said: "Great Prince, we have with us among our followers men who are able to construct mangonels which shall cast such great stones that the garrison will never be able to stand them, but will surrender incontinently, as soon as the mangonels or trebuchets shall have shot into the town."

The Khan bade them with all his heart have such mangonels made as speedily as possible. Now Messer Nicolo and his brother and his son immediately caused timber to be brought, as much as they desired, and fit for the work in hand. And they had two men among their followers, a German and a Nestorian Christian, who were masters of that business, and these they directed to construct two or three mangonels capable of casting stones of 300 lbs. weight. Accordingly they made three

fine mangonels, each of which cast stones of 300 lbs. weight and more. And when they were complete and ready for use, the Emperor and the others were greatly pleased to see them, and caused several stones to be shot in their presence; whereat they marvelled greatly and greatly praised the work. And the Khan ordered that the engines should be carried to his army which was at the leaguer of Siang-yang-fu.

And when the engines were got to the camp they were forthwith set up, to the great admiration of the Tartars. And what shall I tell you? When the engines were set up and put in gear, a stone was shot from each of them into the town. These took effect among the buildings, crashing and smashing through everything with huge din and commotion. And when the townspeople witnessed this new and strange visitation they were so astonished and dismayed that they wist not what to do or say. They took counsel together, but no counsel could be suggested how to escape from these engines, for the thing seemed to them to be done by sorcery. They declared that they were all dead men if they yielded not, so they determined to surrender on such conditions as they could get. Wherefore they straightway sent word to the commander of the army that they were ready to surrender on the same terms as the other cities of the province had done, and to become the subjects of the Great Khan; and to this the captain of the host consented.

So the men of the city surrendered, and were received to terms; and this all came about through the exertions of Messer Nicolo, and Messer Maffeo, and Messer Marco; and it was no small matter. For this city and province is one of the best that the Great Khan possesses, and brings him in great revenues.

CHAPTER LXXI

Concerning the City of Chen-chau and the Great River Kiang

You must know that when you leave the city of Yang-chau, after going 15 miles south-east, you come to a city called Chen-chau, of no great size, but possessing a very great amount of shipping and trade. The people are Idolaters and subject to the Great Khan, and use paper-money.

And you must know that this city stands on the greatest river in the world, the name of which is Kiang. It is in some places ten miles wide, in others eight, in others six, and it is more than 100 days' journey in length from one end to the other. This it is that brings so much trade to the city we are speaking of; for on the waters of that river merchandize is perpetually coming and going, from and to the various parts of the world, enriching the city, and bringing a great revenue to the Great Khan.

And I assure you this river flows so far and traverses so many countries and cities that in good sooth there pass and repass on its waters a great number of vessels, and more wealth and merchandize than on all the rivers and all the seas of Christendom put together! It seems indeed more like a Sea than a River. Messer Marco Polo said that he once beheld at that city 15,000 vessels at one time. And you may judge, if this city, of no great size, has such a number, how many must there be altogether, considering that on the banks of this river there are more than sixteen provinces and more than 200 great cities, besides towns and villages, all possessing vessels?

Messer Marco Polo aforesaid tells us that he heard from the officer employed to collect the Great Khan's duties on this river that there passed up-stream 200,000 vessels in the year, without counting those that passed down! [Indeed as it has a course of such great length,

and receives so many other navigable rivers, it is no wonder that the merchandize which is borne on it is of vast amount and value. And the article in largest quantity of all is salt, which is carried by this river and its branches to all the cities on their banks, and thence to the other cities in the interior.]

The vessels which ply on this river are decked. They have but one mast, but they are of great burthen, for I can assure you they carry (reckoning by our weight) from 4000 up to 12,000 cantars each.

Now we will quit this matter and I will tell you of another city called Kwa-chau. But first I must mention a point I had forgotten. You must know that the vessels on this river, in going up-stream, have to be tracked, for the current is so strong that they could not make head in any other manner. Now the tow-line, which is some 300 paces in length, is made of nothing but cane. 'Tis in this way: they have those great canes of which I told you before that they are some fifteen paces in length; these they take and split from end to end [into many slender strips], and then they twist these strips together so as to make a rope of any length they please. And the ropes so made are stronger than if they were made of hemp.

[There are at many places on this river hills and rocky eminences on which the idol-monasteries and other edifices are built; and you find on its shores a constant succession of villages and inhabited places.]

CHAPTER LXXII

Concerning the City of Kwa-chau

Kwa-chau is a small city towards the south-east. The people are subject to the Great Khan and have paper-money. It stands upon the river before mentioned. At this place are collected great quantities of corn and rice

to be transported to the great city of Cambaluc for the use of the Khan's Court; for the grain for the Court all comes from this part of the country. You must understand that the Emperor hath caused a water-communication to be made from this city to Cambaluc, in the shape of a wide and deep channel dug between stream and stream, between lake and lake, forming as it were a great river on which large vessels can ply. And thus there is a communication all the way from this city of Kwa-chau to Cambaluc; so that great vessels with their loads can go the whole way. A land road also exists, for the earth dug from those channels has been thrown up so as to form an embanked road on either side.

Just opposite to the city of Kwa-chau, in the middle of the river, there stands a rocky island on which there is an idol-monastery containing some 200 idolatrous friars, and a vast number of idols. And this abbey holds supremacy over a number of other idol-monasteries, just like an archbishop's see among Christians.

Now we will leave this and cross the river, and I will tell you of a city called Chen-kiang-fu.

CHAPTER LXXIII

Of the City of Chen-kiang-fu

Chen-kiang-fu is a city of Manzi. The people are Idolaters and subject to the Great Khan, and have paper-money, and live by handicrafts and trade. They have plenty of silk, from which they make sundry kinds of stuffs of silk and gold. There are great and wealthy merchants in the place; plenty of game is to be had, and of all kinds of victual.

There are in this city two churches of Nestorian Christians which were established in the year of our Lord 1278; and I will tell you how that happened. You see, in the year just named, the Great Khan sent a Baron of

his whose name was MAR SARGHIS, a Nestorian Christian, to be governor of this city for three years. And during the three years that he abode there he caused these two Christian churches to be built, and since then there they are. But before his time there was no church, neither were there any Christians.

CHAPTER LXXIV

OF THE CITY OF CHANG-CHAU AND THE SLAUGHTER OF CERTAIN ALANS THERE

LEAVING the city of Chen-kiang-fu and travelling three days south-east through a constant succession of busy and thriving towns and villages, you arrive at the great and noble city of CHANG-CHAU. The people are Idolaters, use paper-money, and are subject to the Great Khan. They live by trade and handicrafts, and they have plenty of silk. They have also abundance of game, and of all manner of victuals, for it is a most productive territory.

Now I must tell you of an evil deed that was done, once upon a time, by the people of this city, and how dearly they paid for it.

You see, at the time of the conquest of the great province of Manzi, when Bayan was in command, he sent a company of his troops, consisting of a people called Alans, who are Christians, to take this city. They took it accordingly, and when they had made their way in, they lighted upon some good wine. Of this they drank until they were all drunk, and then they lay down and slept like so many swine. So when night fell, the townspeople, seeing that they were all dead-drunk, fell upon them and slew them all; not a man escaped.

And when Bayan heard that the townspeople had thus treacherously slain his men, he sent another Admiral of his with a great force, and stormed the city, and put the whole of the inhabitants to the sword; not a man of

them escaped death. And thus the whole population of that city was exterminated.

Now we will go on, and I will tell you of another city called Su-chau.

CHAPTER LXXV

Of the Noble City of Su-chau

Su-chau is a very great and noble city. The people are Idolaters, subjects of the Great Khan, and have paper-money. They possess silk in great quantities, from which they make gold brocade and other stuffs, and they live by their manufactures and trade.

The city is passing great, and has a circuit of some 60 miles; it hath merchants of great wealth and an incalculable number of people. Indeed, if the men of this city and of the rest of Manzi had but the spirit of soldiers they would conquer the world; but they are no soldiers at all, only accomplished traders and most skilful craftsmen. There are also in this city many philosophers and leeches, diligent students of nature.

And you must know that in this city there are 6,000 bridges, all of stone, and so lofty that a galley, or even two galleys at once, could pass underneath one of them.

In the mountains belonging to this city, rhubarb and ginger grow in great abundance; insomuch that you may get some 40 pounds of excellent fresh ginger for a Venice groat. And the city has sixteen other great trading cities under its rule. The name of the city, Su-chau, signifies in our tongue, "Earth," and that of another near it, of which we shall speak presently, called Kinsay, signifies "Heaven"; and these names are given because of the great splendour of the two cities.

Now let us quit Su-chau, and go on to another which is called Hu-chau, one day's journey distant; it is a great and fine city, rife with trade and manufactures. But as there is nothing more to say of it we shall go on and

I will tell you of another great and noble city called Wukiang. The people are Idolaters, &c., and possess much silk and other merchandize, and they are expert traders and craftsmen. Let us now quit Wukiang and tell you of another city called Kia-hsing, a great and rich place. The people are Idolaters, &c., and they live by trade and manufactures. They make great quantities of taffeta of different kinds, and they have much game in the neighbourhood. There is however nothing more to say about the place, so we shall now proceed.

CHAPTER LXXVI

Description of the Great City of Kinsay, which is the Capital of the whole Country of Manzi

When you have left the city of Kia-hsing and have travelled for three days through a splendid country, passing a number of towns and villages, you arrive at the most noble city of Kinsay, a name which is as much as to say in our tongue "The City of Heaven," as I told you before.

And since we have got thither I will enter into particulars about its magnificence; and these are well worth the telling, for the city is beyond dispute the finest and the noblest in the world. In this we shall speak according to the written statement which the Queen of this Realm sent to Bayan the conqueror of the country for transmission to the Great Khan, in order that he might be aware of the surpassing grandeur of the city and might be moved to save it from destruction or injury. I will tell you all the truth as it was set down in that document. For truth it was, as the said Messer Marco Polo at a later date was able to witness with his own eyes. And now we shall rehearse those particulars.

First and foremost, then, the document stated the city of Kinsay to be so great that it hath an hundred miles of

compass. And there are in it twelve thousand bridges of stone, for the most part so lofty that a great fleet could pass beneath them. And let no man marvel that there are so many bridges, for you see the whole city stands as it were in the water and surrounded by water, so that a great many bridges are required to give free passage about it. [And though the bridges be so high the approaches are so well contrived that carts and horses do cross them.]

The document aforesaid also went on to state that there were in this city twelve guilds of the different crafts, and that each guild had 12,000 houses in the occupation of its workmen. Each of these houses contains at least 12 men, whilst some contain 20 and some 40,—not that these are all masters, but inclusive of the journeymen who work under the masters. And yet all these craftsmen had full occupation, for many other cities of the kingdom are supplied from this city with what they require.

The document aforesaid also stated that the number and wealth of the merchants, and the amount of goods that passed through their hands, was so enormous that no man could form a just estimate thereof. And I should have told you with regard to those masters of the different crafts who are at the head of such houses as I have mentioned, that neither they nor their wives ever touch a piece of work with their own hands, but live as nicely and delicately as if they were kings and queens. The wives indeed are most dainty and angelical creatures! Moreover it was an ordinance laid down by the King that every man should follow his father's business and no other, no matter if he possessed 100,000 bezants.

Inside the city there is a Lake which has a compass of some 30 miles: and all round it are erected beautiful palaces and mansions, of the richest and most exquisite structure that you can imagine, belonging to the nobles of the city. There are also on its shores many abbeys

and churches of the Idolaters. In the middle of the Lake are two Islands, on each of which stands a rich, beautiful and spacious edifice, furnished in such style as to seem fit for the palace of an Emperor. And when any one of the citizens desired to hold a marriage feast, or to give any other entertainment, it used to be done at one of these palaces. And everything would be found there ready to order, such as silver plate, trenchers, and dishes [napkins and table-cloths], and whatever else was needful. The King made this provision for the gratification of his people, and the place was open to every one who desired to give an entertainment. [Sometimes there would be at these palaces an hundred different parties; some holding a banquet, others celebrating a wedding; and yet all would find good accommodation in the different apartments and pavilions, and that in so well ordered a manner that one party was never in the way of another.]

The houses of the city are provided with lofty towers of stone in which articles of value are stored for fear of fire; for most of the houses themselves are of timber, and fires are very frequent in the city.

The people are Idolaters; and since they were conquered by the Great Khan they use paper-money. [Both men and women are fair and comely, and for the most part clothe themselves in silk, so vast is the supply of that material, both from the whole district of Kinsay, and from the imports by traders from other provinces.] And you must know they eat every kind of flesh, even that of dogs and other unclean beasts, which nothing would induce a Christian to eat.

Since the Great Khan occupied the city he has ordained that each of the 12,000 bridges should be provided with a guard of ten men, in case of any disturbance, or of any being so rash as to plot treason or insurrection against him. [Each guard is provided with a hollow instrument of wood and with a metal basin, and with a

time-keeper to enable him to know the hour of the day or night. And so when one hour of the night is past the sentry strikes one on the wooden instrument and on the basin, so that the whole quarter of the city is made aware that one hour of the night is gone. At the second hour he gives two strokes, and so on, keeping always wide awake and on the look-out. In the morning again, from the sunrise, they begin to count anew, and strike one hour as they did in the night, and so on hour after hour.

Part of the watch patrols the quarter, to see if any light or fire is burning after the lawful hours; if they find any they mark the door, and in the morning the owner is summoned before the magistrates, and unless he can plead a good excuse he is punished. Also if they find any one going about the streets at unlawful hours they arrest him, and in the morning they bring him before the magistrates. Likewise if in the daytime they find any poor cripple unable to work for his livelihood, they take him to one of the hospitals, of which there are many, founded by the ancient kings, and endowed with great revenues. Or if he be capable of work they oblige him to take up some trade. If they see that any house has caught fire they immediately beat upon that wooden instrument to give the alarm, and this brings together the watchmen from the other bridges to help to extinguish it, and to save the goods of the merchants or others, either by removing them to the towers above mentioned, or by putting them in boats and transporting them to the islands in the lake. For no citizen dares leave his house at night, or to come near the fire; only those who own the property, and those watchmen who flock to help, of whom there shall come one or two thousand at the least.]

Moreover, within the city there is an eminence on which stands a Tower, and at the top of the tower is hung a slab of wood. Whenever fire or any other alarm breaks out in the city a man who stands there with a

mallet in his hand beats upon the slab, making a noise that is heard to a great distance. So when the blows upon this slab are heard, everybody is aware that fire has broken out, or that there is some other cause of alarm.

The Khan watches this city with especial diligence because it forms the head of all Manzi; and because he has an immense revenue from the duties levied on the transactions of trade therein, the amount of which is such that no one would credit it on mere hearsay.

All the streets of the city are paved with stone or brick, as indeed are all the highways throughout Manzi, so that you ride and travel in every direction without inconvenience. Were it not for this pavement you could not do so, for the country is very low and flat, and after rain 'tis deep in mire and water. [But as the Great Khan's couriers could not gallop their horses over the pavement, the side of the road is left unpaved for their convenience. The pavement of the main street of the city also is laid out in two parallel ways of ten paces in width on either side, leaving a space in the middle laid with fine gravel, under which are vaulted drains which convey the rain water into the canals; and thus the road is kept ever dry.]

You must know also that the city of Kinsay has some 3000 baths, the water of which is supplied by springs. They are hot baths, and the people take great delight in them, frequenting them several times a month, for they are very cleanly in their persons. They are the finest and largest baths in the world; large enough for 100 persons to bathe together.

And the Ocean Sea comes within 25 miles of the city at a place called Kan-pu, where there is a town and an excellent haven, with a vast amount of shipping which is engaged in the traffic to and from India and other foreign parts, exporting and importing many kinds of wares, by which the city benefits. And a great river

flows from the city of Kinsay to that sea-haven, by which vessels can come up to the city itself. This river extends also to other places further inland.

Know also that the Great Khan hath distributed the territory of Manzi into nine parts, which he hath constituted into nine kingdoms. To each of these kingdoms a king is appointed who is subordinate to the Great Khan, and every year renders the accounts of his kingdom to the fiscal office at the capital. This city of Kinsay is the seat of one of these kings, who rules over 140 great and wealthy cities. For in the whole of this vast country of Manzi there are more than 1200 great and wealthy cities, without counting the towns and villages, which are in great numbers. And you may receive it for certain that in each of those 1200 cities the Great Khan has a garrison, and that the smallest of such garrisons musters 1000 men; whilst there are some of 10,000, 20,000 and 30,000; so that the total number of troops is something scarcely calculable. The troops forming these garrisons are not all Tartars. Many are from the province of Cathay, and good soldiers too. But you must not suppose they are by any means all of them cavalry; a very large proportion of them are foot soldiers, according to the special requirements of each city. And all of them belong to the army of the Great Khan.

I repeat that everything appertaining to this city is on so vast a scale, and the Great Khan's yearly revenues therefrom are so immense, that it is not easy even to put it in writing, and it seems past belief to one who merely hears it told. But I *will* write it down for you.

First, however, I must mention another thing. The people of this country have a custom, that as soon as a child is born they write down the day and hour and the planet and sign under which its birth has taken place; so that every one among them knows the day of his birth. And when any one intends a journey he goes to the astrologers, and gives the particulars of his nativity in

order to learn whether he shall have good luck or no. Sometimes they will say *no*, and in that case the journey is put off till such day as the astrologer may recommend. These astrologers are very skilful at their business, and often their words come to pass, so the people have great faith in them.

They burn the bodies of the dead. And when any one dies the friends and relations make a great mourning for the deceased, and clothe themselves in hempen garments, and follow the corpse playing on a variety of instruments and singing hymns to their idols. And when they come to the burning place, they take representations of things cut out of parchment, such as caparisoned horses, male and female slaves, camels, armour, suits of cloth of gold (and money), in great quantities, and these things they put on the fire along with the corpse, so that they are all burnt with it. And they tell you that the dead man shall have all these slaves and animals of which the effigies are burnt, alive in flesh and blood, and the money in gold, at his disposal in the next world; and that the instruments which they have caused to be played at his funeral, and the idol hymns that have been chaunted, shall also be produced again to welcome him in the next world; and that the idols themselves will come to do him honour.

Furthermore there exists in this city the palace of the king who fled, him who was Emperor of Manzi, and that is the greatest palace in the world, as I shall tell you more particularly. For you must know its demesne hath a compass of ten miles, all enclosed with lofty battlemented walls; and inside the walls are the finest and most delectable gardens upon earth, and filled too with the finest fruits. There are numerous fountains in it also, and lakes full of fish. In the middle is the palace itself, a great and splendid building. It contains 20 great and handsome halls, one of which is more spacious than the rest, and affords room for a vast multitude to dine. It is

all painted in gold, with many histories and representations of beasts and birds, of knights and dames, and many marvellous things. It forms a really magnificent spectacle, for over all the walls and all the ceiling you see nothing but paintings in gold. And besides these halls the palace contains 1000 large and handsome chambers, all painted in gold and divers colours.

Moreover, I must tell you that in this city there are 160 *tomans* of fires, or in other words 160 *tomans* of houses. Now I should tell you that the *toman* is 10,000, so that you can reckon the total as altogether 1,600,000 houses, among which are a great number of rich palaces. There is one church only, belonging to the Nestorian Christians.

There is another thing I must tell you. It is the custom for every burgess of this city, and in fact for every description of person in it, to write over his door his own name, the name of his wife, and those of his children, his slaves, and all the inmates of his house, and also the number of animals that he keeps. And if any one dies in the house then the name of that person is erased, and if any child is born its name is added. So in this way the sovereign is able to know exactly the population of the city. And this is the practice also throughout all Manzi and Cathay.

And I must tell you that every hosteler who keeps an hostel for travellers is bound to register their names and surnames, as well as the day and month of their arrival and departure. And thus the sovereign hath the means of knowing, whenever it pleases him, who come and go throughout his dominions. And certes this is a wise order and a provident.

CHAPTER LXXVII

[Further Particulars concerning the Great City of Kinsay]

[The position of the city is such that it has on one side a lake of fresh and exquisitely clear water (already spoken of), and on the other a very large river. The waters of the latter fill a number of canals of all sizes which run through the different quarters of the city, carry away all impurities, and then enter the Lake; whence they issue again and flow to the Ocean, thus producing a most excellent atmosphere. By means of these channels, as well as by the streets, you can go all about the city, Both streets and canals are so wide and spacious that carts on the one and boats on the other can readily pass to and fro, conveying necessary supplies to the inhabitants.

At the opposite side the city is shut in by a channel, perhaps 40 miles in length, very wide, and full of water derived from the river aforesaid, which was made by the ancient kings of the country in order to relieve the river when flooding its banks. This serves also as a defence to the city, and the earth dug from it has been thrown inwards, forming a kind of mound enclosing the city.

In this part are the ten principal markets, though besides these there are a vast number of others in the different parts of the town. The former are all squares a half a mile to the side, and along their front passes the main street, which is 40 paces in width, and runs straight from end to end of the city, crossing many bridges of easy and commodious approach. At every four miles of its length comes one of those great squares of 2 miles (as we have mentioned) in compass. So also parallel to this great street, but at the back of the market places, there runs a very large canal, on the bank of which towards the squares are built great houses of stone, in which the

merchants from India and other foreign parts store their wares, to be handy for the markets. In each of the squares is held a market three days in the week, frequented by 40,000 or 50,000 persons, who bring thither for sale every possible necessary of life, so that there is always an ample supply of every kind of meat and game, as of roebuck, red deer, fallow deer, hares, rabbits, partridges, pheasants, francolins, quails, fowls, capons, and of ducks and geese an infinite quantity; for so many are bred on the Lake that for a Venice groat of silver you can have a couple of geese and two couple of ducks. Then there are the shambles where the larger animals are slaughtered, such as calves, beeves, kids, and lambs, the flesh of which is eaten by the rich and the great dignitaries.

Those markets make a daily display of every kind of vegetables and fruits; and among the latter there are in particular certain pears of enormous size, weighing as much as ten pounds apiece, and the pulp of which is white and fragrant like a confection; besides peaches in their season both yellow and white, of every delicate flavour.

Neither grapes nor wine are produced there, but very good raisins are brought from abroad, and wine likewise. The natives, however, do not much care about wine, being used to that kind of their own made from rice and spices. From the Ocean Sea also come daily supplies of fish in great quantity, brought 25 miles up the river, and there is also great store of fish from the lake, which is the constant resort of fishermen, who have no other business. Their fish is of sundry kinds, changing with the season; and, owing to the impurities of the city which pass into the lake, it is remarkably fat and savoury. Any one who should see the supply of fish in the market would suppose it impossible that such a quantity could ever be sold; and yet in a few hours the whole shall be cleared away; so great is the number of inhabitants who are accustomed to delicate living. Indeed they eat fish and flesh at the same meal.

All the ten market places are encompassed by lofty houses, and below these are shops where all sorts of crafts are carried on, and all sorts of wares are on sale, including spices and jewels and pearls. Some of these shops are entirely devoted to the sale of wine made from rice and spices, which is constantly made fresh and fresh, and is sold very cheap.

Certain of the streets are occupied by the women of the town, who are in such a number that I dare not say what it is. They are found not only in the vicinity of the market places, where usually a quarter is assigned to them, but all over the city. They exhibit themselves splendidly attired and abundantly perfumed, in finely garnished houses, with trains of waiting-women. These women are extremely accomplished in all the arts of allurement, and readily adapt their conversation to all sorts of persons, insomuch that strangers who have once tasted their attractions seem to get bewitched, and are so taken with their blandishments and their fascinating ways that they never can get these out of their heads. Hence it comes to pass that when they return home they say they have been to Kinsay or the City of Heaven, and their only desire is to get back thither as soon as possible.

Other streets are occupied by the Physicians, and by the Astrologers, who are also teachers of reading and writing; and an infinity of other professions have their places round about those squares. In each of the squares there are two great palaces facing one another, in which are established the officers appointed by the King to decide differences arising between merchants, or other inhabitants of the quarter. It is the daily duty of these officers to see that the guards are at their posts on the neighbouring bridges, and to punish them at their discretion if they are absent.

All along the main street that we have spoken of, as running from end to end of the city, both sides are lined

with houses and great palaces and the gardens pertaining to them, whilst in the intervals are the houses of tradesmen engaged in their different crafts. The crowd of people that you meet here at all hours, passing this way and that on their different errands, is so vast that no one would believe it possible that victuals enough could be provided for their consumption, unless they should see how, on every market-day, all those squares are thronged and crammed with purchasers, and with the traders who have brought in stores of provisions by land or water; and everything they bring in is disposed of.

To give you an example of the vast consumption in this city let us take the article of *pepper;* and that will enable you in some measure to estimate what must be the quantity of victual, such as meat, wine, groceries, which have to be provided for the general consumption. Now Messer Marco heard it stated by one of the Great Khan's officers of customs that the quantity of pepper introduced daily for consumption into the city of Kinsay amounted to 43 loads, each load being equal to 223 lbs.

The houses of the citizens are well built and elaborately finished; and the delight they take in decoration, in painting and in architecture, leads them to spend in this way sums of money that would astonish you.

The natives of the city are men of peaceful character, both from education and from the example of their kings, whose disposition was the same. They know nothing of handling arms, and keep none in their houses. You hear of no feuds or noisy quarrels or dissensions of any kind among them. Both in their commercial dealings and in their manufactures they are thoroughly honest and truthful, and there is such a degree of good will and neighbourly attachment among both men and women that you would take the people who live in the same street to be all one family.

And this familiar intimacy is free from all jealousy or suspicion of the conduct of their women. These they

treat with the greatest respect, and a man who should presume to make loose proposals to a married woman would be regarded as an infamous rascal. They also treat the foreigners who visit them for the sake of trade with great cordiality, and entertain them in the most winning manner, affording them every help and advice on their business. But on the other hand they hate to see soldiers, and not least those of the Great Khan's garrisons, regarding them as the cause of their having lost their native kings and lords.

On the Lake of which we have spoken there are numbers of boats and barges of all sizes for parties of pleasure. These will hold 10, 15, 20, or more persons, and are from 15 to 20 paces in length, with flat bottoms and ample breadth of beam, so that they always keep their trim. Any one who desires to go a-pleasuring with the women, or with a party of his own sex, hires one of these barges, which are always to be found completely furnished with tables and chairs and all the other apparatus for a feast. The roof forms a level deck, on which the crew stand, and pole the boat along whithersoever may be desired, for the Lake is not more than 2 paces in depth. The inside of this roof and the rest of the interior is covered with ornamental painting in gay colours, with windows all round that can be shut or opened, so that the party at table can enjoy all the beauty and variety of the prospects on both sides as they pass along. And truly a trip on this Lake is a much more charming recreation than can be enjoyed on land. For on the one side lies the city in its entire length, so that the spectators in the barges, from the distance at which they stand, take in the whole prospect in its full beauty and grandeur, with its numberless palaces, temples, monasteries, and gardens, full of lofty trees, sloping to the shore. And the Lake is never without a number of other such boats, laden with pleasure parties; for it is the great delight of the citizens here, after they have disposed of the day's business, to

pass the afternoon in enjoyment with the ladies of their families, or perhaps with others less reputable, either in these barges or in driving about the city in carriages.

Of these latter we must also say something, for they afford one mode of recreation to the citizens in going about the town, as the boats afford another in going about the Lake. In the main street of the city you meet an infinite succession of these carriages passing to and fro. They are long covered vehicles, fitted with curtains and cushions, and affording room for six persons; and they are in constant request for ladies and gentlemen going on parties of pleasure. In these they drive to certain gardens, where they are entertained by the owners in pavilions erected on purpose, and there they divert themselves the livelong day, with their ladies, returning home in the evening in those same carriages.

(Further Particulars of the Palace of the King Facfur)

The whole enclosure of the Palace was divided into three parts. The middle one was entered by a very lofty gate, on each side of which there stood on the ground-level vast pavilions, the roofs of which were sustained by columns painted and wrought in gold and the finest azure. Opposite the gate stood the chief Pavilion, larger than the rest, and painted in like style, with gilded columns, and a ceiling wrought in splendid gilded sculpture, whilst the walls were artfully painted with the stories of departed kings.

On certain days, sacred to his gods, the King Facfur used to hold a great court and give a feast to his chief lords, dignitaries, and rich manufacturers of the city of Kinsay. On such occasions those pavilions used to give ample accommodation for 10,000 persons sitting at table. This court lasted for ten or twelve days, and exhibited an astonishing and incredible spectacle in the magnificence of the guests, all clothed in silk and gold,

with a profusion of precious stones; for they tried to outdo each other in the splendour and richness of their appointments. Behind this great Pavilion that faced the great gate, there was a wall with a passage in it shutting off the inner part of the Palace. On entering this you found another great edifice in the form of a cloister surrounded by a portico with columns, from which opened a variety of apartments for the King and the Queen, adorned like the outer walls with such elaborate work as we have mentioned. From the cloister again you passed into a covered corridor, six paces in width, of great length, and extending to the margin of the lake. On either side of this corridor were ten courts, in the form of oblong cloisters surrounded by colonnades; and in each cloister or court were fifty chambers with gardens to each. In these chambers were quartered one thousand young ladies in the service of the King. The King would sometimes go with the Queen and some of these maidens to take his diversion on the Lake, or to visit the Idol-temples, in boats all canopied with silk.

The other two parts of the enclosure were distributed in groves, and lakes, and charming gardens planted with fruit-trees, and preserves for all sorts of animals, such as roe, red deer, fallow deer, hares, and rabbits. Here the King used to take his pleasure in company with those damsels of his; some in carriages, some on horseback, whilst no man was permitted to enter. Sometimes the King would set the girls a-coursing after the game with dogs, and when they were tired they would hie to the groves that overhung the lakes, and leaving their clothes there they would come forth naked and enter the water and swim about hither and thither, whilst it was the King's delight to watch them; and then all would return home. Sometimes the King would have his dinner carried to those groves, which were dense with lofty trees, and there would be waited on by those young ladies. And thus he passed his life in this constant dalliance

with women, without so much as knowing what *arms* meant! And the result of all this cowardice and effeminacy was that he lost his dominion to the Great Khan in that base and shameful way that you have heard.

All this account was given me by a very rich merchant of Kinsay when I was in that city. He was a very old man, and had been in familiar intimacy with the King Facfur, and knew the whole history of his life; and having seen the Palace in its glory was pleased to be my guide over it. As it is occupied by the King appointed by the Great Khan, the first pavilions are still maintained as they used to be, but the apartments of the ladies are all gone to ruin and can only just be traced. So also the wall that enclosed the groves and gardens is fallen down, and neither trees nor animals are there any longer.]

CHAPTER LXXVIII

Treating of the great Yearly Revenue that the Great Khan hath from Kinsay

Now I will tell you about the great revenue which the Great Khan draweth every year from the said city of Kinsay and its territory, forming a ninth part of the whole country of Manzi.

First there is the salt, which brings in a great revenue. For it produces every year, in round numbers, fourscore *tomans* of gold; and the *toman* is worth 70,000 *saggi* of gold, so that the total value of the fourscore *tomans* will be five millions and six hundred thousand *saggi* of gold, each saggio being worth more than a gold florin or ducat; in sooth, a vast sum of money! [This province, you see, adjoins the ocean, on the shores of which are many lagoons or salt marshes, in which the sea-water dries up during the summer time; and thence they extract such a quantity of salt as suffices for the supply of five of the kingdoms of Manzi besides this one.]

Having told you of the revenue from salt, I will now tell you of that which accrues to the Great Khan from the duties on merchandize and other matters.

You must know that in this city and its dependencies they make great quantities of sugar, as indeed they do in the other eight divisions of this country; so that I believe the whole of the rest of the world together does not produce such a quantity, at least, if that be true which many people have told me; and the sugar alone again produces an enormous revenue.—However, I will not repeat the duties on every article separately, but tell you how they go in the lump. Well, all spicery pays three and a third per cent. on the value; and all merchandize likewise pays three and a third per cent. [But sea-borne goods from India and other distant countries pay ten per cent.] The rice-wine also makes a great return, and coals, of which there is a great quantity; and so do the twelve guilds of craftsmen that I told you of, with their 12,000 stations apiece, for every article they make pays duty. And the silk which is produced in such abundance makes an immense return. But why should I make a long story of it? The silk, you must know, pays ten per cent., and many other articles also pay ten per cent.

And you must know that Messer Marco Polo, who relates all this, was several times sent by the Great Khan to inspect the amount of his customs and revenue from this ninth part of Manzi, and he found it to be, exclusive of the salt revenue which we have mentioned already, 210 *tomans* of gold, equivalent to 14,700,000 *saggi* of gold; one of the most enormous revenues that ever was heard of. And if the sovereign has such a revenue from one-ninth part of the country, you may judge what he must have from the whole of it! However, to speak the truth, this part is the greatest and most productive; and because of the great revenue that the Great Khan derives from it, it is his favourite province, and he takes

all the more care to watch it well, and to keep the people contented.

Now we will quit this city and speak of others.

CHAPTER LXXIX

Of the City of Tanpiju and Others

When you leave Kinsay and travel a day's journey to the south-east, through a plenteous region, passing a succession of dwellings and charming gardens, you reach the city of Tanpiju, a great, rich, and fine city, under Kinsay. The people are subject to the Khan, and have paper-money, and are Idolaters, and burn their dead in the way described before. They live by trade and manufactures and handicrafts, and have all necessaries in great plenty and cheapness.

But there is no more to be said about it, so we proceed, and I will tell you of another city called Wu-chau at three days' distance from Tanpiju. The people are Idolaters, &c., and the city is under Kinsay. They live by trade and manufactures.

Travelling through a succession of towns and villages that look like one continuous city, two days further on to the south-east, you find the great and fine city of Kiu-chau which is under Kinsay. The people are Idolaters, &c. They have plenty of silk, and live by trade and handicrafts, and have all things necessary in abundance. At this city you find the largest and longest canes that are in all Manzi; they are full four palms in girth and 15 paces in length.

When you have left Kiu-chau you travel four days S.E. through a beautiful country, in which towns and villages are very numerous. There is abundance of game both in beasts and birds; and there are very large and fierce lions. After those four days you come to the great and fine city of Kiang-shang. It is situated upon a hill which

divides the River, so that the one portion flows up country and the other down. It is still under the government of Kinsay.

I should tell you that in all the country of Manzi they have no sheep, though they have beeves and kine, goats and kids and swine in abundance. The people are Idolaters here, &c.

When you leave Kiang-shang you travel three days through a very fine country with many towns and villages, traders and craftsmen, and abounding in game of all kinds, and arrive at the city of Chu-chau. The people are Idolaters, &c., and live by trade and manufactures. It is a fine, noble, and rich city, and is the last of the government of Kinsay in this direction. The other kingdom which we now enter, called Fu-chau, is also one of the nine great divisions of Manzi as Kinsay is.

CHAPTER LXXX

Concerning the Kingdom of Fu-chau

On leaving Chu-chau, which is the last city of the kingdom of Kinsay, you enter the kingdom of Fu-chau, and travel six days in a south-easterly direction through a country of mountains and valleys, in which are a number of towns and villages with great plenty of victuals and abundance of game. Lions, great and strong, are also very numerous. The country produces ginger and galingale in immense quantities, insomuch that for a Venice groat you may buy fourscore pounds of good fine-flavoured ginger. They have also a kind of fruit resembling saffron, and which serves the purpose of saffron just as well.

And you must know the people eat all manner of unclean things, even the flesh of a man, provided he has not died a natural death. So they look out for the bodies

of those that have been put to death and eat their flesh, which they consider excellent.

Those who go to war in those parts do as I am going to tell you. They shave the hair off the forehead and cause it to be painted in blue like the blade of a glaive. They all go afoot except the chief; they carry spears and swords, and are the most savage people in the world, for they go about constantly killing people, whose blood they drink, and then devour the bodies.

Now I will quit this and speak of other matters. You must know then that after going three days out of the six that I told you of you come to the city of KE-LING-FU, a very great and noble city, belonging to the Great Khan. This city hath three stone bridges which are among the finest and best in the world. They are a mile long and some nine paces in width, and they are all decorated with rich marble columns. Indeed they are such fine and marvellous works that to build any one of them must have cost a treasure.

The people live by trade and manufactures, and have great store of silk [which they weave into various stuffs], and of ginger and galingale. [They also make much cotton cloth of dyed thread, which is sent all over Manzi.] Their women are particularly beautiful. And there is a strange thing there which I needs must tell you. You must know they have a kind of fowls which have no feathers, but hair only, like a cat's fur. They are black all over; they lay eggs just like our fowls, and are very good to eat.

In the other three days of the six that I have mentioned above, you continue to meet with many towns and villages, with traders, and goods for sale, and craftsmen. The people have much silk, and are Idolaters, and subject to the Great Khan. There is plenty of game of all kinds, and there are great and fierce lions which attack travellers. In the last of those three days' journey, when you have gone 15 miles you find a city called UNKEN, where there

is an immense quantity of sugar made. From this city the Great Khan gets all the sugar for the use of his Court, a quantity worth a great amount of money. [And before this city came under the Great Khan these people knew not how to make fine sugar; they only used to boil and skim the juice, which when cold left a black paste. But after they came under the Great Khan some men of Babylonia who happened to be at the Court proceeded to this city and taught the people to refine the sugar with the ashes of certain trees.]

There is no more to say of the place, so now we shall speak of the splendour of Fu-chau. When you have gone 15 miles from the city of Unken, you come to this noble city which is the capital of the kingdom. So we will now tell you what we know of it.

CHAPTER LXXXI

Concerning the Greatness of the City of Fu-chau

Now this city of Fu-chau is the key of the kingdom which is called Chonka, and which is one of the nine great divisions of Manzi. The city is a seat of great trade and great manufactures. The people are Idolaters and subject to the Great Khan. And a large garrison is maintained there by that prince to keep the kingdom in peace and subjection. For the city is one which is apt to revolt on very slight provocation.

There flows through the middle of this city a great river, which is about a mile in width, and many ships are built at the city which are launched upon this river. Enormous quantities of sugar are made there, and there is a great traffic in pearls and precious stones. For many ships of India come to these parts bringing many merchants who traffic about the Isles of the Indies. For this city is, as I must tell you, in the vicinity of the Ocean Port of Zayton, which is greatly frequented by the ships

of India with their cargoes of various merchandize; and from Zayton ships come this way right up to the city of Fu-chau by the river I have told you of; and 'tis in this way that the precious wares of India come hither.

The city is really a very fine one and kept in good order, and all necessaries of life are there to be had in great abundance and cheapness.

CHAPTER LXXXII

Of the City and Great Haven of Zayton

Now when you quit Fu-chau and cross the River, you travel for five days south-east through a fine country, meeting with a constant succession of flourishing cities, towns, and villages, rich in every product. You travel by mountains and valleys and plains, and in some places by great forests in which are many of the trees which give Camphor. There is plenty of game on the road, both of bird and beast. The people are all traders and craftsmen, subjects of the Great Khan, and under the government of Fu-chau. When you have accomplished those five days' journey you arrive at the very great and noble city of Zayton, which is also subject to Fu-chau.

At this city you must know is the Haven of Zayton, frequented by all the ships of India, which bring thither spicery and all other kinds of costly wares. It is the port also that is frequented by all the merchants of Manzi, for hither is imported the most astonishing quantity of goods and of precious stones and pearls, and from this they are distributed all over Manzi. And I assure you that for one shipload of pepper that goes to Alexandria or elsewhere, destined for Christendom, there come a hundred such, aye and more too, to this haven of Zayton; for it is one of the two greatest havens in the world for commerce.

The Great Khan derives a very large revenue from

the duties paid in this city and haven; for you must know that on all the merchandize imported, including precious stones and pearls, he levies a duty of ten per cent., or in other words takes tithe of everything. Then again the ship's charge for freight on small wares is 30 per cent., on pepper 44 per cent., and on lign-aloes, sandal-wood, and other bulky goods 40 per cent., so that between freight and the Khan's duties the merchant has to pay a good half the value of his investment [though on the other half he makes such a profit that he is always glad to come back with a new supply of merchandize]. But you may well believe from what I have said that the Khan hath a vast revenue from this city.

There is a great abundance here of all provision for every necessity of man's life. [It is a charming country, and the people are very quiet, and fond of an easy life. Many come hither from Upper India to have their bodies painted with the needle in the way we have elsewhere described, there being many adepts at this craft in the city.]

Let me tell you also that in this province there is a town called Tyunju, where they make vessels of porcelain of all sizes, the finest that can be imagined. They make it nowhere but in that city, and thence it is exported all over the world. Here it is abundant and very cheap, insomuch that for a Venice groat you can buy three dishes so fine that you could not imagine better.

I should tell you that in this city (*i.e.* of Zayton) they have a peculiar language. [For you must know that throughout all Manzi they employ one speech and one kind of writing only, but yet there are local differences of dialect, as you might say of Genoese, Milanese, Florentines, and Neapolitans, who though they speak different dialects can understand one another.]

And I assure you that the Great Khan has as large customs and revenues from this kingdom of Chonka as from Kinsay, aye and more too.

We have now spoken of but three out of the nine kingdoms of Manzi, to wit Yang-chau and Kinsay and Fu-chau. We could tell you about the other six, but it would be too long a business; so we will say no more about them.

And now you have heard all the truth about Cathay and Manzi and many other countries, as has been set down in this Book; the customs of the people and the various objects of commerce, the beasts and birds, the gold and silver and precious stones, and many other matters have been rehearsed to you. But our Book as yet does not contain nearly all that we purpose to put therein. For we have still to tell you all about the people of India and the notable things of that country, which are well worth the describing, for they are marvellous indeed. What we shall tell is all true, and without any lies. And we shall set down all the particulars in writing just as Messer Marco Polo related them. And he well knew the facts, for he remained so long in India, and enquired so diligently into the manners and peculiarities of the nations, that I can assure you there never was a single man before who learned so much and beheld so much as he did.

BOOK THIRD

JAPAN, THE ARCHIPELAGO, SOUTHERN INDIA, AND THE COASTS AND ISLANDS OF THE INDIAN SEA

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

Of the Merchant Ships of Manzi that sail upon the Indian Seas

Having finished our discourse concerning those countries wherewith our Book hath been occupied thus far, we are now about to enter on the subject of India, and to tell you of all the wonders thereof.

And first let us speak of the ships in which merchants go to and fro amongst the Isles of India.

These ships, you must know, are of fir timber. They have but one deck, though each of them contains some 50 or 60 cabins, wherein the merchants abide greatly at their ease, every man having one to himself. The ship hath but one rudder, but it hath four masts; and sometimes they have two additional masts, which they ship and unship at pleasure.

[Moreover the larger of their vessels have some thirteen compartments or severances in the interior, made with planking strongly framed, in case mayhap the ship should spring a leak, either by running on a rock or by the blow of a hungry whale (as shall betide ofttimes, for when the ship in her course by night sends a ripple back alongside of the whale, the creature seeing the foam fancies there is something to eat afloat, and makes a rush forward, whereby it often shall stave in some part of the ship). In such case the water that enters the leak flows to the bilge, which is always kept clear; and the mariners having ascertained where the damage is, empty the cargo from that compartment into those adjoining, for the planking is so well fitted that the water cannot pass from one

compartment to another. They then stop the leak and replace the lading.]

The fastenings are all of good iron nails and the sides are double, one plank laid over the other, and caulked outside and in. The planks are not pitched, for those people do not have any pitch, but they daub the sides with another matter, deemed by them far better than pitch; it is this. You see they take some lime and some chopped hemp, and these they knead together with a certain wood-oil; and when the three are thoroughly amalgamated, they hold like any glue. And with this mixture they do paint their ships.

Each of their great ships requires at least 200 mariners [some of them 300]. They are indeed of great size, for one ship shall carry 5000 or 6000 baskets of pepper [and they used formerly to be larger than they are now]. And aboard these ships, you must know, when there is no wind they use sweeps, and these sweeps are so big that to pull them requires four mariners to each. Every great ship has certain large barks or tenders attached to it; these are large enough to carry 1000 baskets of pepper, and carry 50 or 60 mariners apiece [some of them 80 or 100], and they are likewise moved by oars; they assist the great ship by towing her, at such times as her sweeps are in use [or even when she is under sail, if the wind be somewhat on the beam; not if the wind be astern, for then the sails of the big ship would take the wind out of those of the tenders, and she would run them down]. Each ship has two [or three] of these barks, but one is bigger than the others. There are also some ten [small] boats for the service of each great ship, to lay out the anchors, catch fish, bring supplies aboard, and the like. When the ship is under sail she carries these boats slung to her sides. And the large tenders have their boats in like manner.

When the ship has been a year in work and they wish to repair her, they nail on a third plank over the first two,

and caulk and pay it well; and when another repair is wanted they nail on yet another plank, and so on year by year as it is required. Howbeit, they do this only for a certain number of years, and till there are six thicknesses of planking. When a ship has come to have six planks on her sides, one over the other, they take her no more on the high seas, but make use of her for coasting as long as she will last, and then they break her up.

Now that I have told you about the ships which sail upon the Ocean Sea and among the Isles of India, let us proceed to speak of the various wonders of India; but first and foremost I must tell you about a number of Islands that there are in that part of the Ocean Sea where we now are, I mean the Islands lying to the eastward. So let us begin with an Island which is called Chipangu.

CHAPTER II

Description of the Island of Chipangu, and the Great Khan's Despatch of a Host against it

Chipangu is an Island towards the east in the high seas, 1500 miles distant from the Continent; and a very great Island it is.

The people are white, civilized, and well-favoured. They are Idolaters, and are dependent on nobody. And I can tell you the quantity of gold they have is endless; for they find it in their own Islands, [and the King does not allow it to be exported. Moreover] few merchants visit the country because it is so far from the mainland, and thus it comes to pass that their gold is abundant beyond all measure.

I will tell you a wonderful thing about the Palace of the Lord of that Island. You must know that he hath a great Palace which is entirely roofed with fine gold, just as our churches are roofed with lead, insomuch that it would scarcely be possible to estimate its value. More-

over, all the pavement of the Palace, and the floors of its chambers, are entirely of gold, in plates like slabs of stone, a good two fingers thick; and the windows also are of gold, so that altogether the richness of this Palace is past all bounds and all belief.

They have also pearls in abundance, which are of a rose colour, but fine, big, and round, and quite as valuable as the white ones. [In this Island some of the dead are buried, and others are burnt. When a body is burnt, they put one of these pearls in the mouth, for such is their custom.] They have also quantities of other precious stones.

Kublai, the Grand Khan who now reigneth, having heard much of the immense wealth that was in this Island, formed a plan to get possession of it. For this purpose he sent two of his Barons with a great navy, and a great force of horse and foot. These Barons were able and valiant men, one of them called ABACAN and the other VONSAINCHIN, and they weighed with all their company from the ports of Zayton and Kinsay, and put out to sea. They sailed until they reached the Island aforesaid, and there they landed, and occupied the open country and the villages, but did not succeed in getting possession of any city or castle. And so a disaster befel them, as I shall now relate.

You must know that there was much ill-will between those two Barons, so that one would do nothing to help the other. And it came to pass that there arose a north wind which blew with great fury, and caused great damage along the coasts of that Island, for its harbours were few. It blew so hard that the Great Khan's fleet could not stand against it. And when the chiefs saw that, they came to the conclusion that if the ships remained where they were the whole navy would perish. So they all got on board and made sail to leave the country. But when they had gone about four miles they came to a small Island, on which they were driven ashore in spite of all they could do; and a large part of the fleet was wrecked,

and a great multitude of the force perished, so that there escaped only some 30,000 men, who took refuge on this Island.

These held themselves for dead men, for they were without food, and knew not what to do, and they were in great despair when they saw that such of the ships as had escaped the storm were making full sail for their own country without the slightest sign of turning back to help them. And this was because of the bitter hatred between the two Barons in command of the force; for the Baron who escaped never showed the slightest desire to return to his colleague who was left upon the Island in the way you have heard; though he might easily have done so after the storm ceased; and it endured not long. He did nothing of the kind, however, but made straight for home. And you must know that the Island to which the soldiers had escaped was uninhabited; there was not a creature upon it but themselves.

Now we will tell you what befel those who escaped on the fleet, and also those who were left upon the Island.

CHAPTER III

What further came of the Great Khan's Expedition against Chipangu

You see those who were left upon the Island, some 30,000 souls, as I have said, did hold themselves for dead men, for they saw no possible means of escape. And when the King of the Great Island got news how the one part of the expedition had saved themselves upon that Isle, and the other part was scattered and fled, he was right glad thereat, and he gathered together all the ships of his territory and proceeded with them, the sea now being calm, to the little Isle, and landed his troops all round it. And when the Tartars saw them thus arrive, and the whole force landed, without any guard having been left on board

the ships (the act of men very little acquainted with such work), they had the sagacity to feign flight. [Now the Island was very high in the middle, and whilst the enemy were hastening after them by one road they fetched a compass by another and] in this way managed to reach the enemy's ships and to get aboard of them. This they did easily enough, for they encountered no opposition.

Once they were on board they got under weigh immediately for the great Island, and landed there, carrying with them the standards and banners of the King of the Island; and in this wise they advanced to the capital. The garrison of the city, suspecting nothing wrong, when they saw their own banners advancing supposed that it was their own host returning, and so gave them admittance. The Tartars as soon as they had got in seized all the bulwarks and drove out all who were in the place except the pretty women, and these they kept for themselves. In this way the Great Khan's people got possession of the city.

When the King of the great Island and his army perceived that both fleet and city were lost, they were greatly cast down; howbeit, they got away to the great Island on board some of the ships which had not been carried off. And the King then gathered all his host to the siege of the city, and invested it so straitly that no one could go in or come out. Those who were within held the place for seven months, and strove by all means to send word to the Great Khan; but it was all in vain, they never could get the intelligence carried to him. So when they saw they could hold out no longer they gave themselves up, on condition that their lives should be spared, but still that they should never quit the Island. And this befel in the year of our Lord 1279. The Great Khan ordered the Baron who had fled so disgracefully to lose his head. And afterwards he caused the other also, who had been left on the Island, to be put to death, for he had never behaved as a good soldier ought to do.

But I must tell you a wonderful thing that I had forgotten, which happened on this expedition.

You see, at the beginning of the affair, when the Khan's people had landed on the great Island and occupied the open country as I told you, they stormed a tower belonging to some of the islanders who refused to surrender, and they cut off the heads of all the garrison except eight; on these eight they found it impossible to inflict any wound! Now this was by virtue of certain stones which they had in their arms inserted between the skin and the flesh, with such skill as not to show at all externally. And the charm and virtue of these stones was such that those who wore them could never perish by steel. So when the Barons learned this they ordered the men to be beaten to death with clubs. And after their death the stones were extracted from the bodies of all, and were greatly prized.

Now the story of the discomfiture of the Great Khan's folk came to pass as I have told you. But let us have done with that matter, and return to our subject.

CHAPTER IV

Concerning the Fashion of the Idols

Now you must know that the Idols of Cathay, and of Manzi, and of this Island, are all of the same class. And in this Island as well as elsewhere, there be some of the Idols that have the head of an ox, some that have the head of a pig, some of a dog, some of a sheep, and some of divers other kinds. And some of them have four heads, whilst some have three, one growing out of either shoulder. There are also some that have four hands, some ten, some a thousand! And they do put more faith in those Idols that have a thousand hands than in any of the others. And when any Christian asks them why they make their Idols in so many different guises, and

not all alike, they reply that just so their forefathers were wont to have them made, and just so they will leave them to their children, and these to the after generations. And so they will be handed down for ever. And you must understand that the deeds ascribed to these Idols are such a parcel of devilries as it is best not to tell. So let us have done with the Idols, and speak of other things.

But I must tell you one thing still concerning that Island (and 'tis the same with the other Indian Islands), that if the natives take prisoner an enemy who cannot pay a ransom, he who hath the prisoner summons all his friends and relations, and they put the prisoner to death, and then they cook him and eat him, and they say there is no meat in the world so good!—But now we *will* have done with that Island and speak of something else.

You must know the Sea in which lie the Islands of those parts is called the Sea of Chin, which is as much as to say "The Sea over against Manzi." For, in the language of those Isles, when they say *Chin*, 'tis Manzi they mean. And I tell you with regard to that Eastern Sea of Chin, according to what is said by the experienced pilots and mariners of those parts, there be 7459 Islands in the waters frequented by the said mariners; and that is how they know the fact, for their whole life is spent in navigating that sea. And there is not one of those Islands but produces valuable and odorous woods like the lignaloe, aye and better too; and they produce also a great variety of spices. For example in those Islands grows pepper as white as snow, as well as the black in great quantities. In fact the riches of those Islands is something wonderful, whether in gold or precious stones, or in all manner of spicery; but they lie so far off from the mainland that it is hard to get to them. And when the ships of Zayton and Kinsay do voyage thither they make vast profits by their venture.

It takes them a whole year for the voyage, going in winter and returning in summer. For in that Sea there are but two winds that blow, the one that carries them outward and the other that brings them homeward; and the one of these winds blows all the winter, and the other all the summer. And you must know these regions are so far from India that it takes a long time also for the voyage thence.

Though that Sea is called the Sea of Chin, as I have told you, yet it is part of the Ocean Sea all the same. But just as in these parts people talk of the Sea of England and the Sea of Rochelle, so in those countries they speak of the Sea of Chin and the Sea of India, and so on, though they all are but parts of the Ocean.

Now let us have done with that region which is very inaccessible and out of the way. Moreover, Messer Marco Polo never was there. And let me tell you the Great Khan has nothing to do with them, nor do they render him any tribute or service.

So let us go back to Zayton and take up the order of our book from that point.

CHAPTER V

Of the Great Country called Champa

[Leaving the port of Zayton you sail westward and something south-westward for 1500 miles, passing a gulf called Hainan, having a length of two months' sail towards the north. Along the whole of its south-east side it borders on the province of Manzi, and on the other side with Anin and Toloman, and many other provinces formerly spoken of. Within this Gulf there are innumerable Islands, almost all well-peopled; and in these is found a great quantity of gold-dust, which is collected from the sea where the rivers discharge. There is copper also, and other things; and the people drive a

trade with each other in the things that are peculiar to their respective Islands. They have also a traffic with the people of the mainland, selling them gold and copper and other things; and purchasing in turn what they stand in need of. In the greater part of these Islands plenty of grain grows. This gulf is so great, and inhabited by so many people, that it seems like a world in itself.]

You must know that on leaving the port of Zayton you sail west-south-west for 1500 miles, and then you come to a country called CHAMPA, a very rich region, having a king of its own. The people are Idolaters and pay a yearly tribute to the Great Khan, which consists of elephants and nothing but elephants. And I will tell you how they came to pay this tribute.

It happened in the year of Christ 1278 that the Great Khan sent a Baron of his called Sotu with a great force of horse and foot against this King of Champa, and this Baron opened the war on a great scale against the King and his country.

Now the King [whose name was Accambale] was a very aged man, nor had he such a force as the Baron had. And when he saw what havoc the Baron was making with his kingdom he was grieved to the heart. So he bade messengers get ready and despatched them to the Great Khan. And they said to the Khan: "Our Lord the King of Champa salutes you as his liege lord, and would have you to know that he is stricken in years and long hath held his realm in peace. And now he sends you word by us that he is willing to be your liege-man, and will send you every year a tribute of as many elephants as you please. And he prays you in all gentleness and humility that you would send word to your Baron to desist from harrying his kingdom and to quit his territories. These shall henceforth be at your absolute disposal, and the King shall hold them of you."

When the Great Khan had heard the King's ambassage he was moved with pity, and sent word to that Baron

of his to quit that kingdom with his army, and to carry his arms to the conquest of some other country; and as soon as this command reached them they obeyed it. Thus it was then that this King became vassal of the Great Khan, and paid him every year a tribute of 20 of the greatest and finest elephants that were to be found in the country.

But now we will leave that matter, and tell you other particulars about the King of Champa.

You must know that in that kingdom no woman is allowed to marry until the King shall have seen her; if the woman pleases him then he takes her to wife; if she does not, he gives her a dowry to get her a husband withal. In the year of Christ 1288, Messer Marco Polo was in that country, and at that time the King had, between sons and daughters, 326 children, of whom at least 150 were men fit to carry arms.

There are very great numbers of elephants in this kingdom, and they have lignaloes in great abundance. They have also extensive forests of the wood called *Bonús*, which is jet black, and of which chessmen and pen-cases are made. But there is nought more to tell, so let us proceed.

CHAPTER VI

Concerning the Great Island of Java

When you sail from Champa, 1500 miles in a course between south and south-east, you come to a great Island called Java. And the experienced mariners of those islands who know the matter well, say that it is the greatest Island in the world, and has a compass of more than 3000 miles. It is subject to a great King and tributary to no one else in the world. The people are Idolaters. The Island is of surpassing wealth, producing black pepper, nutmegs, spikenard, galingale, cubebs, cloves, and all other kinds of spices.

This Island is also frequented by a vast amount of shipping, and by merchants who buy and sell costly goods from which they reap great profit. Indeed the treasure of this Island is so great as to be past telling. And I can assure you the Great Khan never could get possession of this Island, on account of its great distance, and the great expense of an expedition thither. The merchants of Zayton and Manzi draw annually great returns from this country.

CHAPTER VII

Wherein the Isles of Sondor and Kondor are spoken of; and the Kingdom of Lohok

When you leave Champa and sail for 700 miles on a course between south and south-west, you arrive at two Islands, a greater and a less. The one is called Sondor and the other Kondor. As there is nothing about them worth mentioning, let us go on five hundred miles beyond Sondor, and then we find another country which is called Lohok. It is a good country and a rich; [it is on the mainland]; and it has a king of its own. The people are Idolaters and have a peculiar language, and pay tribute to nobody, for their country is so situated that no one can enter it to do them ill. Indeed if it were possible to get at it, the Great Khan would soon bring them under subjection to him.

In this country the brazil which we make use of grows in great plenty; and they also have gold in incredible quantity. They have elephants likewise, and much game. In this kingdom too are gathered all the porcelain shells which are used for small change in all those regions, as I have told you before.

There is nothing else to mention except that this is a very wild region, visited by few people; nor does the

king desire that any strangers should frequent the country, and so find out about his treasure and other resources. We will now proceed, and tell you of something else.

CHAPTER VIII

Of the Island called Pentam, and the City Malayur

When you leave Lohok and sail for 500 miles towards the south, you come to an island called Pentam, a very wild place. All the wood that grows thereon consists of odoriferous trees. There is no more to say about it; so let us sail about sixty miles further between those two Islands. Throughout this distance there is but four paces' depth of water, so that great ships in passing this channel have to lift their rudders, for they draw nearly as much water as that.

And when you have gone these 60 miles, and again about 30 more, you come to an Island which forms a Kingdom, and is called Malayur. The people have a King of their own, and a peculiar language. The city is a fine and noble one, and there is great trade carried on there. All kinds of spicery are to be found there, and all other necessaries of life.

CHAPTER IX

Concerning the Island of Java the Less. The Kingdoms of Perlak and Pasei

When you leave the Island of Pentam and sail about 100 miles, you reach the Island of Java the Less. For all its name 'tis none so small but that it has a compass of two thousand miles or more. Now I will tell you all about this Island.

You see there are upon it eight kingdoms and eight crowned kings. The people are all Idolaters, and every

kingdom has a language of its own. The Island hath great abundance of treasure, with costly spices, lign-aloes and spikenard and many others that never come into our parts.

Now I am going to tell you all about these eight kingdoms, or at least the greater part of them. But let me premise one marvellous thing, and that is the fact that this Island lies so far to the south that the North Star, little or much, is never to be seen!

Now let us resume our subject, and first I will tell you of the kingdom of PERLAK.

This kingdom, you must know, is so much frequented by the Saracen merchants that they have converted the natives to the Law of Mahommet—I mean the townspeople only, for the hill-people live for all the world like beasts, and eat human flesh, as well as all other kinds of flesh, clean or unclean. And they worship this, that, and the other thing; for in fact the first thing that they see on rising in the morning, that they do worship for the rest of the day.

Having told you of the kingdom of Perlak, I will now tell of another which is called PASEI.

When you quit the kingdom of Perlak you enter upon that of Pasei. This also is an independent kingdom, and the people have a language of their own; but they are just like beasts without laws or religion. They call themselves subjects of the Great Khan, but they pay him no tribute, indeed they are so far away that his men could not go thither. Still all these Islanders declare themselves to be his subjects, and sometimes they send him curiosities as presents. There are wild elephants in the country, and numerous unicorns, which are very nearly as big. They have hair like that of a buffalo, feet like those of an elephant, and a horn in the middle of the forehead, which is black and very thick. They do no mischief, however, with the horn, but with the tongue alone; for this is covered all over with long and strong prickles [and when savage with any one they crush him under

their knees and then rasp him with their tongue]. The head resembles that of a wild boar, and they carry it ever bent towards the ground. They delight much to abide in mire and mud. 'Tis a passing ugly beast to look upon, and is not in the least like that which our stories tell of as being caught in the lap of a virgin; in fact, 'tis altogether different from what we fancied. There are also monkeys here in great numbers and of sundry kinds; and goshawks as black as crows. These are very large birds and capital for fowling.

I may tell you moreover that when people bring home pygmies which they allege to come from India, 'tis all a lie and a cheat. For those little men, as they call them, are manufactured on this Island, and I will tell you how. You see there is on the Island a kind of monkey which is very small, and has a face just like a man's. They take these, and pluck out all the hair except the hair of the beard and on the breast, and then they dry them and stuff them and daub them with saffron and other things until they look like men. But you see it is all a cheat; for nowhere in India nor anywhere else in the world were there ever men seen so small as these pretended pygmies.

Now I will say no more of the kingdom of Pasei, but tell you of the others in succession.

CHAPTER X

The Kingdoms of Samatra and Dagroian

So you must know that when you leave the kingdom of Pasei you come to another kingdom called Samatra, on the same Island. And in that kingdom Messer Marco Polo was detained five months by the weather, which would not allow of his going on. And I tell you that here again neither the Pole-star nor the stars of the Maestro were to be seen, much or little. The people here are wild Idolaters; they have a king who is great and rich; but

they also call themselves subjects of the Great Khan. When Messer Mark was detained on this Island five months by contrary winds, [he landed with about 2000 men in his company; they dug large ditches on the landward side to encompass the party, resting at either end on the sea-haven, and within these ditches they made bulwarks or stockades of timber] for fear of those brutes of man-eaters; [for there is great store of wood there; and the Islanders having confidence in the party supplied them with victuals and other things needful.] There is abundance of fish to be had, the best in the world. The people have no wheat, but live on rice. Nor have they any wine except such as I shall now describe.

You must know that they derive it from a certain kind of tree that they have. When they want wine they cut a branch of this, and attach a great pot to the stem of the tree at the place where the branch was cut; in a day and a night they will find the pot filled. This wine is excellent drink, and is got both white and red. [It is of such surpassing virtue that it cures dropsy and tisick and spleen.] The trees resemble small date-palms; . . . and when cutting a branch no longer gives a flow of wine, they water the root of the tree, and before long the branches again begin to give out wine as before. They have also great quantities of Indian nuts [as big as a man's head], which are good to eat when fresh; [being sweet and savoury, and white as milk. The inside of the meat of the nut is filled with a liquor like clear fresh water, but better to the taste, and more delicate than wine or any other drink that ever existed.]

Now that we have done telling you about this kingdom, let us quit it, and we will tell you of Dagroian.

When you leave the kingdom of Samatra you come to another which is called DAGROIAN. It is an independent kingdom, and has a language of its own. The people are very wild, but they call themselves the subjects of the Great Khan. I will tell you a wicked custom of theirs.

When one of them is ill they send for their sorcerers, and put the question to them, whether the sick man shall recover of his sickness or no. If they say that he will recover, then they let him alone till he gets better. But if the sorcerers foretell that the sick man is to die, the friends send for certain judges of theirs to put to death him who has thus been condemned by the sorcerers to die. These men come, and lay so many clothes upon the sick man's mouth that they suffocate him. And when he is dead they have him cooked, and gather together all the dead man's kin, and eat him. And I assure you they do suck the very bones till not a particle of marrow remains in them; for they say that if any nourishment remained in the bones this would breed worms, and then the worms would die for want of food, and the death of those worms would be laid to the charge of the deceased man's soul. And so they eat him up stump and rump. And when they have thus eaten him they collect his bones and put them in fine chests, and carry them away, and place them in caverns among the mountains where no beast nor other creature can get at them. And you must know also that if they take prisoner a man of another country, and he cannot pay a ransom in coin, they kill and eat him straightway. It is a very evil custom and a parlous.

Now that I have told you about this kingdom let us leave it, and I will tell you of Lambri.

CHAPTER XI

Of the Kingdoms of Lambri and Fansur

When you leave that kingdom you come to another which is called Lambri. The people are Idolaters, and call themselves the subjects of the Great Khan. They have plenty of Camphor and of all sorts of other spices. They also have brazil in great quantities. This they sow, and when it is grown to the size of a small shoot

they take it up and transplant it; then they let it grow for three years, after which they tear it up by the root. You must know that Messer Marco Polo aforesaid brought some seed of the brazil, such as they sow, to Venice with him, and had it sown there; but never a thing came up. And I fancy it was because the climate was too cold.

Now you must know that in this kingdom of Lambri there are men with tails; these tails are of a palm in length, and have no hair on them. These people live in the mountains and are a kind of wild men. Their tails are about the thickness of a dog's. There are also plenty of unicorns in that country, and abundance of game in birds and beasts.

Now then I have told you about the kingdom of Lambri.

You then come to another kingdom which is called FANSUR. The people are Idolaters, and also call themselves subjects of the Great Khan; and understand, they are still on the same Island that I have been telling you of. In this kingdom of Fansur grows the best Camphor in the world called *Canfora Fansuri*. It is so fine that it sells for its weight in fine gold.

The people have no wheat, but have rice which they eat with milk and flesh. They also have wine from trees such as I told you of. And I will tell you another great marvel. They have a kind of trees that produce flour, and excellent flour it is for food. These trees are very tall and thick, but have a very thin bark, and inside the bark they are crammed with flour. And I tell you that Messer Marco Polo, who witnessed all this, related how he and his party did sundry times partake of this flour made into bread, and found it excellent.

There is now no more to relate. For out of those eight kingdoms we have told you about six that lie at this side of the Island. I shall tell you nothing about the other two kingdoms that are at the other side of the Island, for the said Messer Marco Polo never was there. Howbeit

we have told you about the greater part of this Island of the Lesser Java: so now we will quit it, and I will tell you of a very small Island that is called Gomespola.

CHAPTER XII

Concerning the Island of Nicobar

When you leave the Island of Java (the less) and the kingdom of Lambri, you sail north about 150 miles, and then you come to two Islands, one of which is called Nicobar. In this Island they have no king nor chief, but live like beasts. And I tell you they go all naked, both men and women, and do not use the slightest covering of any kind. They are Idolaters. Their woods are all of noble and valuable kinds of trees; such as Red Sanders and Indian-nut and Cloves and Brazil and sundry other good spices.

There is nothing else worth relating; so we will go on, and I will tell you of an Island called Andaman.

CHAPTER XIII

Concerning the Island of Andaman

Andaman is a very large Island. The people are without a king and are Idolaters, and no better than wild beasts. And I assure you all the men of this Island of Andaman have heads like dogs, and teeth and eyes likewise; in fact, in the face they are all just like big mastiff dogs! They have a quantity of spices; but they are a most cruel generation, and eat everybody that they can catch, if not of their own race. They live on flesh and rice and milk, and have fruits different from any of ours.

Now that I have told you about this race of people, as indeed it was highly proper to do in this our book, I will go on to tell you about an Island called Ceyloñ, as you shall hear.

CHAPTER XIV

Concerning the Island of Ceylon

When you leave the Island of Andaman and sail about a thousand miles in a direction a little south of west, you come to the Island of Ceylon, which is in good sooth the best Island of its size in the world. You must know that it has a compass of 2400 miles, but in old times it was greater still, for it then had a circuit of about 3600 miles, as you find in the charts of the mariners of those seas. But the north wind there blows with such strength that it has caused the sea to submerge a large part of the Island; and that is the reason why it is not so big now as it used to be. For you must know that, on the side where the north wind strikes, the Island is very low and flat, insomuch that in approaching on board ship from the high seas you do not see the land till you are right upon it. Now I will tell you all about this Island.

They have a king there whom they call Sendemain, and are tributary to nobody. The people are Idolaters, and go quite naked except that they cover the middle. They have no wheat, but have rice, and sesamum of which they make their oil. They live on flesh and milk, and have tree-wine such as I have told you of. And they have brazil-wood, much the best in the world.

Now I will quit these particulars, and tell you of the most precious article that exists in the world. You must know that rubies are found in this Island and in no other country in the world but this. They find there also sapphires and topazes and amethysts, and many other stones of price. And the King of this Island possesses a ruby which is the finest and biggest in the world; I will tell you what it is like. It is about a palm in length, and as thick as a man's arm; to look at, it is the most resplendent object upon earth; it is quite free from flaw and as red as fire. Its value is so great that a price for it in money

could hardly be named at all. You must know that the Great Khan sent an embassy and begged the King as a favour greatly desired by him to sell him this ruby, offering to give for it the ransom of a city, or in fact what the King would. But the King replied that on no account whatever would he sell it, for it had come to him from his ancestors.

The people of Ceylon are no soldiers, but poor cowardly creatures. And when they have need of soldiers they get Saracen troops from foreign parts.

CHAPTER XV

The Same continued. The History of Sakya-Muni Burkhan and the beginning of Idolatry

Furthermore you must know that in the Island of Ceylon there is an exceeding high mountain; it rises right up so steep and precipitous that no one could ascend it, were it not that they have taken and fixed to it several great and massive iron chains, so disposed that by help of these men are able to mount to the top. And I tell you they say that on this mountain is the sepulchre of Adam our first parent; at least that is what the Saracens say. But the Idolaters say that it is the sepulchre of Sakya-Muni Burkhan, before whose time there were no idols. They hold him to have been the best of men, a great saint in fact, according to their fashion, and the first in whose name idols were made.

He was the son, as their story goes, of a great and wealthy king. And he was of such an holy temper that he would never listen to any worldly talk, nor would he consent to be king. And when the father saw that his son would not be king, nor yet take any part in affairs, he took it sorely to heart. And first he tried to tempt him with great promises, offering to crown him king, and to surrender all authority into his hands. The son,

however, would none of his offers; so the father was in great trouble, and all the more that he had no other son but him, to whom he might bequeath the kingdom at his own death. So, after taking thought on the matter, the King caused a great palace to be built, and placed his son therein, and caused him to be waited on there by a number of maidens, the most beautiful that could anywhere be found. And he ordered them to divert themselves with the prince, night and day, and to sing and dance before him, so as to draw his heart towards worldly enjoyments. But 'twas all of no avail, for none of those maidens could ever tempt the king's son to any wantonness, and he only abode the firmer in his chastity, leading a most holy life, after their manner thereof. And I assure you he was so staid a youth that he had never gone out of the palace, and thus he had never seen a dead man, nor any one who was not hale and sound; for the father never allowed any man that was aged or infirm to come into his presence. It came to pass however one day that the young gentleman took a ride, and by the roadside he beheld a dead man. The sight dismayed him greatly, as he never had seen such a sight before. Incontinently he demanded of those who were with him what thing that was? and then they told him it was a dead man. "How, then," quoth the king's son, "do all men die?" "Yea, forsooth," said they. Whereupon the young gentleman said never a word, but rode on right pensively. And after he had ridden a good way he fell in with a very aged man who could no longer walk, and had not a tooth in his head, having lost all because of his great age. And when the king's son beheld this old man he asked what that might mean, and wherefore the man could not walk? Those who were with him replied that it was through old age the man could walk no longer, and had lost all his teeth. And so when the king's son had thus learned about the dead man and about the aged man, he turned back to his palace and

said to himself that he would abide no longer in this evil world, but would go in search of Him Who dieth not, and Who had created him.

So what did he one night but take his departure from the palace privily, and betake himself to certain lofty and pathless mountains. And there he did abide, leading a life of great hardship and sanctity, and keeping great abstinence, just as if he had been a Christian. Indeed, an he had but been so, he would have been a great saint of Our Lord Jesus Christ, so good and pure was the life he led. And when he died they found his body and brought it to his father. And when the father saw dead before him that son whom he loved better than himself, he was near going distraught with sorrow. And he caused an image in the similitude of his son to be wrought in gold and precious stones, and caused all his people to adore it. And they all declared him to be a god; and so they still say.

They tell moreover that he hath died fourscore and four times. The first time he died as a man, and came to life again as an ox; and then he died as an ox and came to life again as a horse, and so on until he had died fourscore and four times; and every time he became some kind of animal. But when he died the eighty-fourth time they say he became a god. And they do hold him for the greatest of all their gods. And they tell that the aforesaid image of him was the first idol that the Idolaters ever had; and from that have originated all the other idols. And this befel in the Island of Ceylon in India.

The Idolaters come thither on pilgrimage from very long distances and with great devotion, just as Christians go to the shrine of Messer Saint James in Gallicia. And they maintain that the monument on the mountain is that of the king's son, according to the story I have been telling you; and that the teeth, and the hair, and the dish that are there were those of the same king's son, whose name was Sakya-Muni Burkhan, or Sakya-Muni

the Saint. But the Saracens also come thither on pilgrimage in great numbers, and *they* say that it is the sepulchre of Adam our first father, and that the teeth, and the hair, and the dish were those of Adam.

Whose they were in truth, God knoweth; howbeit, according to the Holy Scripture of our Church, the sepulchre of Adam is not in that part of the world.

Now it befel that the Great Khan heard how on that mountain there was the sepulchre of our first father Adam, and that some of his hair and of his teeth, and the dish from which he used to eat, were still preserved there. So he thought he would get hold of them somehow or another, and despatched a great embassy for the purpose, in the year of Christ 1284. The ambassadors, with a great company, travelled on by sea and by land until they arrived at the island of Ceylon, and presented themselves before the king. And they were so urgent with him that they succeeded in getting two of the grinder teeth, which were passing great and thick; and they also got some of the hair, and the dish from which that personage used to eat, which is of a very beautiful green porphyry. And when the Great Khan's ambassadors had attained the object for which they had come they were greatly rejoiced, and returned to their lord. And when they drew near to the great city of Cambaluc, where the Great Khan was staying, they sent him word that they had brought back that for which he had sent them. On learning this the Great Khan was passing glad, and ordered all the ecclesiastics and others to go forth to meet these reliques, which he was led to believe were those of Adam.

And why should I make a long story of it? In sooth, the whole population of Cambaluc went forth to meet those reliques, and the ecclesiastics took them over and carried them to the Great Khan, who received them with great joy and reverence, And they find it written in their Scriptures that the virtue of that dish is such

that if food for one man be put therein it shall become enough for five men: and the Great Khan averred that he had proved the thing and found that it was really true.

So now you have heard how the Great Khan came by those reliques; and a mighty great treasure it did cost him! The reliques being, according to the Idolaters, those of that king's son.

CHAPTER XVI

Concerning the Great Province of Maabar, which is called India the Greater, and is on the Mainland

When you leave the Island of Ceylon and sail westward about 60 miles, you come to the great province of Maabar which is styled India the Greater; it is best of all the Indies and is on the mainland.

You must know that in this province there are five kings, who are own brothers. I will tell you about each in turn. The Province is the finest and noblest in the world.

At this end of the Province reigns one of those five Royal Brothers, who is a crowned King, and his name is Sundhara Pandi Devar. In his kingdom they find very fine and great pearls; and I will tell you how they are got.

You must know that the sea here forms a gulf between the Island of Ceylon and the mainland. And all round this gulf the water has a depth of no more than 10 or 12 fathoms, and in some places no more than two fathoms. The pearl-fishers take their vessels, great and small, and proceed into this gulf, where they stop from the beginning of April till the middle of May. They go first to a place called Patlam, and (then) go 60 miles into the gulf. Here they cast anchor and shift from

their large vessels into small boats. You must know that the many merchants who go divide into various companies, and each of these must engage a number of men on wages, hiring them for April and half of May. Of all the produce they have first to pay the King, as his royalty, the tenth part. And they must also pay those men who charm the great fishes, to prevent them from injuring the divers whilst engaged in seeking pearls under water, one twentieth part of all that they take. These fish-charmers are termed *Brahmans;* and their charm holds good for that day only, for at night they dissolve the charm so that the fishes can work mischief at their will. These Brahmans know also how to charm beasts and birds and every living thing. When the men have got into the small boats they jump into the water and dive to the bottom, which may be at a depth of from 4 to 12 fathoms, and there they remain as long as they are able. And there they find the shells that contain the pearls [and these they put into a net bag tied round the waist, and mount up to the surface with them, and then dive anew. When they can't hold their breath any longer they come up again, and after a little down they go once more, and so they go on all day]. The shells are in fashion like oysters or sea-hoods. And in these shells are found pearls, great and small, of every kind, sticking in the flesh of the shell-fish.

In this manner pearls are fished in great quantities, for thence in fact come the pearls which are spread all over the world. And I can tell you the King of that State hath a very great receipt and treasure from his dues upon those pearls.

As soon as the middle of May is past, no more of those pearl-shells are found there. It is true, however, that a long way from that spot, some 300 miles distant, they are also found; but that is in September and the first half of October.

CHAPTER XVII

Continues to speak of the Province of Maabar

You must know that in all this Province of Maabar there is never a Tailor to cut a coat or stitch it, seeing that everybody goes naked! For decency only do they wear a scrap of cloth; and so 'tis with men and women, with rich and poor, aye, and with the King himself, except what I am going to mention.

It is a fact that the King goes as bare as the rest, only round his loins he has a piece of fine cloth, and round his neck he has a necklace entirely of precious stones,—rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and the like, insomuch that this collar is of great value. He wears also hanging in front of his chest from the neck downwards, a fine silk thread strung with 104 large pearls and rubies of great price. The reason why he wears this cord with the 104 great pearls and rubies, is (according to what they tell) that every day, morning and evening, he has to say 104 prayers to his idols. Such is their religion and their custom. And thus did all the Kings his ancestors before him, and they bequeathed the string of pearls to him that he should do the like. [The prayer that they say daily consists of these words, *Pacauta! Pacauta! Pacauta!* And this they repeat 104 times.]

The King aforesaid also wears on his arms three golden bracelets thickly set with pearls of great value, and anklets also of like kind he wears on his legs, and rings on his toes likewise. So let me tell you what this King wears, between gold and gems and pearls, is worth more than a city's ransom. And 'tis no wonder; for he hath great store of such gear; and besides they are found in his kingdom. Moreover nobody is permitted to take out of the kingdom a pearl weighing more than half a *saggio*, unless he manages to do it secretly. This order has been given because the King desires to reserve all

such to himself; and so in fact the quantity he has is something almost incredible. Moreover several times every year he sends his proclamation through the realm that if any one who possesses a pearl or stone of great value will bring it to him, he will pay for it twice as much as it cost. Everybody is glad to do this, and thus the King gets all into his own hands, giving every man his price.

Furthermore, this King hath some five hundred wives, for whenever he hears of a beautiful damsel he takes her to wife. Indeed he did a very sorry deed as I shall tell you. For seeing that his brother had a handsome wife, he took her by force and kept her for himself. His brother, being a discreet man, took the thing quietly and made no noise about it. The King hath many children.

And there are about the King a number of Barons in attendance upon him. These ride with him, and keep always near him, and have great authority in the kingdom; they are called the King's Trusty Lieges. And you must know that when the King dies, and they put him on the fire to burn him, these Lieges cast themselves into the fire round about his body, and suffer themselves to be burnt along with him. For they say they have been his comrades in this world, and that they ought also to keep him company in the other world.

When the King dies none of his children dares to touch his treasure. For they say, "as our father did gather together all this treasure, so we ought to accumulate as much in our turn." And in this way it comes to pass that there is an immensity of treasure accumulated in this kingdom.

Here are no horses bred; and thus a great part of the wealth of the country is wasted in purchasing horses; I will tell you how. You must know that the merchants of Kish and Ormuz, Dhafar and Sohar and Aden collect great numbers of chargers and other horses, and

these they bring to the territories of this King and of his four brothers, who are kings likewise as I told you. For a horse will fetch among them 500 *saggi* of gold, worth more than 100 marks of silver, and vast numbers are sold there every year. Indeed this King wants to buy more than 2000 horses every year, and so do his four brothers who are kings likewise. The reason why they want so many horses every year is that by the end of the year there shall not be one hundred of them remaining, for they all die off. And this arises from mismanagement, for those people do not know in the least how to treat a horse; and besides they have no farriers. The horse-merchants not only never bring any farriers with them, but also prevent any farrier from going thither, lest that should in any degree baulk the sale of horses, which brings them in every year such vast gains. They bring these horses by sea aboard ship.

They have in this country the custom which I am going to relate. When a man is doomed to die for any crime, he may declare that he will put himself to death in honour of such or such an idol; and the government then grants him permission to do so. His kinsfolk and friends then set him up on a cart, and provide him with twelve knives, and proceed to conduct him all about the city, proclaiming aloud: "This valiant man is going to slay himself for the love of (such an idol)." And when they be come to the place of execution he takes a knife and sticks it through his arm, and cries: "I slay myself for the love of (such a god)!" Then he takes another knife and sticks it through his other arm, and takes a third knife and runs it into his belly, and so on until he kills himself outright. And when he is dead his kinsfolk take the body and burn it with a joyful celebration. Many of the women also, when their husbands die and are placed on the pile to be burnt, do burn themselves along with the bodies. And such women as do this have great praise from all.

The people are Idolaters, and many of them worship the ox, because (say they) it is a creature of such excellence. They would not eat beef for anything in the world, nor would they on any account kill an ox. But there is another class of people who are called *Gozy*, and these are very glad to eat beef, though they dare not kill the animal. Howbeit if an ox dies, naturally or otherwise, then they eat him.

And let me tell you, the people of this country have a custom of rubbing their houses all over with cow-dung. Moreover all of them, great and small, King and Barons included, do sit upon the ground only, and the reason they give is that this is the most honourable way to sit, because we all spring from the Earth and to the Earth we must return; so no one can pay the Earth too much honour, and no one ought to despise it.

And about that race of *Govis*, I should tell you that nothing on earth would induce them to enter the place where Messer St. Thomas is—I mean where his body lies, which is in a certain city of the province of Maabar. Indeed, were even 20 or 30 men to lay hold of one of these *Govis* and to try to hold him in the place where the Body of the Blessed Apostle of Jesus Christ lies buried, they could not do it! Such is the influence of the Saint; for it was by people of this generation that he was slain, as you shall presently hear.

No wheat grows in this province, but rice only.

And another strange thing to be told is that there is no possibility of breeding horses in this country, as hath often been proved by trial. For even when a great blood-mare here has been covered by a great blood-horse, the product is nothing but a wretched wry-legged weed, not fit to ride.

The people of the country go to battle all naked, with only a lance and a shield; and they are most wretched soldiers. They will kill neither beast nor bird, nor anything that hath life; and for such animal food as they

eat, they make the Saracens, or others who are not of their own religion, play the butcher.

It is their practice that every one, male and female, do wash the whole body twice every day; and those who do not wash are looked on much as we look on the Patarins. [You must know also that in eating they use the right hand only, and would on no account touch their food with the left hand. All cleanly and becoming uses are ministered to by the right hand, whilst the left is reserved for uncleanly and disagreeable necessities, such as cleansing the secret parts of the body and the like. So also they drink only from drinking vessels, and every man hath his own; nor will any one drink from another's vessel. And when they drink they do not put the vessel to the lips, but hold it aloft and let the drink spout into the mouth. No one would on any account touch the vessel with his mouth, nor give a stranger drink with it. But if the stranger have no vessel of his own they will pour the drink into his hands and he may thus drink from his hands as from a cup.]

They are very strict in executing justice upon criminals, and as strict in abstaining from wine. Indeed they have made a rule that wine-drinkers and seafaring men are never to be accepted as sureties. For they say that to be a seafaring man is all the same as to be an utter desperado, and that his testimony is good for nothing. Howbeit they look on lechery as no sin.

[They have the following rule about debts. If a debtor shall have been several times asked by his creditor for payment, and shall have put him off from day to day with promises, then if the creditor can once meet the debtor and succeed in drawing a circle round him, the latter must not pass out of this circle until he shall have satisfied the claim, or given security for its discharge. If he in any other case presume to pass the circle he is punished with death as a transgressor against right and justice. And the said Messer Marco, when in this king-

dom on his return home, did himself witness a case of this. It was the King, who owed a foreign merchant a certain sum of money, and though the claim had often been presented, he always put it off with promises. Now, one day when the King was riding through the city, the merchant found his opportunity, and drew a circle round both King and horse. The King, on seeing this, halted, and would ride no further; nor did he stir from the spot until the merchant was satisfied. And when the bystanders saw this they marvelled greatly, saying that the King was a most just King indeed, having thus submitted to justice.]

You must know that the heat here is sometimes so great that 'tis something wonderful. And rain falls only for three months in the year, viz. in June, July, and August. Indeed but for the rain that falls in these three months, refreshing the earth and cooling the air, the drought would be so great that no one could exist.

They have many experts in an art which they call Physiognomy, by which they discern a man's character and qualities at once. They also know the import of meeting with any particular bird or beast; for such omens are regarded by them more than by any people in the world. Thus if a man is going along the road and hears some one sneeze, if he deems it (say) a good token for himself he goes on, but if otherwise he stops a bit, or peradventure turns back altogether from his journey.

As soon as a child is born they write down his nativity, that is to say the day and hour, the month, and the moon's age. This custom they observe because every single thing they do is done with reference to astrology, and by advice of diviners skilled in Sorcery and Magic and Geomancy, and such like diabolical arts; and some of them are also acquainted with Astrology.

[All parents who have male children, as soon as these have attained the age of 13, dismiss them from their

home, and do not allow them further maintenance in the family. For they say that the boys are then of an age to get their living by trade; so off they pack them with some twenty or four-and-twenty groats, or at least with money equivalent to that. And these urchins are running about all day from pillar to post, buying and selling. At the time of the pearl-fishery they run to the beach and purchase, from the fishers or others, five or six pearls, according to their ability, and take these to the merchants, who are keeping indoors for fear of the sun, and say to them: "These cost me such a price; now give me what profit you please on them." So the merchant gives something over the cost price for their profit. They do in the same way with many other articles, so that they become trained to be very dexterous and keen traders. And every day they take their food to their mothers to be cooked and served, but do not eat a scrap at the expense of their fathers.]

In this kingdom and all over India the birds and beasts are entirely different from ours, all but one bird which is exactly like ours, and that is the Quail. But everything else is totally different. For example they have bats,—I mean those birds that fly by night and have no feathers of any kind; well, their birds of this kind are as big as a goshawk! Their goshawks again are as black as crows, a good deal bigger than ours, and very swift and sure.

Another strange thing is that they feed their horses with boiled rice and boiled meat, and various other kinds of cooked food. That is the reason why all the horses die off.

They have certain abbeys in which are gods and goddesses to whom many young girls are consecrated; their fathers and mothers presenting them to that idol for which they entertain the greatest devotion. And when the [monks] of a convent desire to make a feast to their god, they send for all those consecrated damsels and

make them sing and dance before the idol with great festivity. They also bring meats to feed their idol withal; that is to say, the damsels prepare dishes of meat and other good things and put the food before the idol, and leave it there a good while, and then the damsels all go to their dancing and singing and festivity for about as long as a great Baron might require to eat his dinner. By that time they say the spirit of the idols has consumed the substance of the food, so they remove the viands to be eaten by themselves with great jollity. This is performed by these damsels several times every year until they are married.

[The reason assigned for summoning the damsels to these feasts is, as the monks say, that the god is vexed and angry with the goddess, and will hold no communication with her; and they say that if peace be not established between them things will go from bad to worse, and they never will bestow their grace and benediction. So they make those girls come in the way described, to dance and sing, all but naked, before the god and the goddess. And those people believe that the god often solaces himself with the society of the goddess.

The men of this country have their beds made of very light canework, so arranged that, when they have got in and are going to sleep, they are drawn up by cords nearly to the ceiling and fixed there for the night. This is done to get out of the way of tarantulas which give terrible bites, as well as of fleas and such vermin, and at the same time to get as much air as possible in the great heat which prevails in that region. Not that everybody does this, but only the nobles and great folks, for the others sleep on the streets.]

Now I have told you about this kingdom of the province of Maabar, and I must pass on to the other kingdoms of the same province, for I have much to tell of their peculiarities.

CHAPTER XVIII

Discoursing of the Place where lieth the Body of St. Thomas the Apostle; and of the Miracles thereof

The Body of Messer St. Thomas the Apostle lies in this province of Maabar at a certain little town having no great population; 'tis a place where few traders go, because there is very little merchandize to be got there, and it is a place not very accessible. Both Christians and Saracens, however, greatly frequent it in pilgrimage. For the Saracens also do hold the Saint in great reverence, and say that he was one of their own Saracens and a great prophet, giving him the title of *Avarian*, which is as much as to say "Holy Man." The Christians who go thither in pilgrimage take of the earth from the place where the Saint was killed, and give a portion thereof to any one who is sick of a quartan or a tertian fever; and by the power of God and of St. Thomas the sick man is incontinently cured. The earth, I should tell you, is red. A very fine miracle occurred there in the year of Christ 1288, as I will now relate.

A certain Baron of that country, having great store of a certain kind of grain that is called *rice*, had filled up with it all the houses that belonged to the church, and stood round about it. The Christian people in charge of the church were much distressed by his having thus stuffed their houses with his rice; the pilgrims too had nowhere to lay their heads; and they often begged the pagan Baron to remove his grain, but he would do nothing of the kind. So one night the Saint himself appeared with a fork in his hand, which he set at the Baron's throat, saying: "If thou void not my houses, that my pilgrims may have room, thou shalt die an evil death," and therewithal the Saint pressed him so hard with the fork that he thought himself a dead man. And when morning came he caused

all the houses to be voided of his rice, and told everybody what had befallen him at the Saint's hands. So the Christians were greatly rejoiced at this grand miracle, and rendered thanks to God and to the blessed St. Thomas. Other great miracles do often come to pass there, such as the healing of those who are sick or deformed, or the like, especially such as be Christians.

[The Christians who have charge of the church have a great number of the Indian Nut trees, whereby they get their living; and they pay to one of those brother Kings six groats for each tree every month.]

Now, I will tell you the manner in which the Christian brethren who keep the church relate the story of the Saint's death.

They tell that the Saint was in the wood outside his hermitage saying his prayers; and round about him were many peacocks, for these are more plentiful in that country than anywhere else. And one of the Idolaters of that country being of the lineage of those called *Govi* that I told you of, having gone with his bow and arrows to shoot peafowl, not seeing the Saint, let fly an arrow at one of the peacocks; and this arrow struck the holy man in the right side, insomuch that he died of the wound, sweetly addressing himself to his Creator. Before he came to that place where he thus died he had been in Nubia, where he converted much people to the faith of Jesus Christ.

The children that are born here are black enough, but the blacker they be the more they are thought of; wherefore from the day of their birth their parents do rub them every week with oil of sesamé, so that they become as black as devils. Moreover, they make their gods black and their devils white, and the images of their saints they do paint black all over.

They have such faith in the ox, and hold it for a thing so holy, that when they go to the wars they take of the hair of the wild-ox, whereof I have elsewhere spoken, and

wear it tied to the necks of their horses; or, if serving on foot, they hang this hair to their shields, or attach it to their own hair. And so this hair bears a high price, since without it nobody goes to the wars in any good heart. For they believe that any one who has it shall come scatheless out of battle.

CHAPTER XIX

Concerning the Kingdom of Motupalli

When you leave Maabar and go about 500 miles in a northerly direction you come to the kingdom of Motupalli. This was formerly under the rule of a King, and since his death, some forty years past, it has been under his Queen, a lady of much discretion, who for the great love she bore him never would marry another husband. And I can assure you that during all that space of forty years she had administered her realm as well as ever her husband did, or better; and as she was a lover of justice, of equity, and of peace, she was more beloved by those of her kingdom than ever was Lady or Lord of theirs before. The people are Idolaters, and are tributary to nobody. They live on flesh, and rice, and milk.

It is in this kingdom that diamonds are got; and I will tell you how. There are certain lofty mountains in those parts; and when the winter rains fall, which are very heavy, the waters come roaring down the mountains in great torrents. When the rains are over, and the waters from the mountains have ceased to flow, they search the beds of the torrents and find plenty of diamonds. In summer also there are plenty to be found in the mountains, but the heat of the sun is so great that it is scarcely possible to go thither, nor is there then a drop of water to be found. Moreover in those mountains great serpents are rife to a marvellous degree, besides other vermin, and this owing to the great heat. The serpents are also

the most venomous in existence, insomuch that any one going to that region runs fearful peril; for many have been destroyed by these evil reptiles.

Now among these mountains there are certain great and deep valleys, to the bottom of which there is no access. Wherefore the men who go in search of the diamonds take with them pieces of flesh, as lean as they can get, and these they cast into the bottom of a valley. Now there are numbers of white eagles that haunt those mountains and feed upon the serpents. When the eagles see the meat thrown down they pounce upon it and carry it up to some rocky hill-top where they begin to rend it. But there are men on the watch, and as soon as they see that the eagles have settled they raise a loud shouting to drive them away. And when the eagles are thus frightened away the men recover the pieces of meat, and find them full of diamonds which have stuck to the meat down in the bottom. For the abundance of diamonds down there in the depths of the valleys is astonishing, but nobody can get down; and if one could, it would be only to be incontinently devoured by the serpents which are so rife there.

There is also another way of getting the diamonds. The people go to the nests of those white eagles, of which there are many, and in their droppings they find plenty of diamonds which the birds have swallowed in devouring the meat that was cast into the valleys. And, when the eagles themselves are taken, diamonds are found in their stomachs.

So now I have told you three different ways in which these stones are found. No other country but this kingdom of Motupalli produces them, but there they are found both abundantly and of large size. Those that are brought to our part of the world are only the refuse, as it were, of the finer and larger stones. For the flower of the diamonds and other large gems, as well as the largest pearls, are all carried to the Great Khan and other Kings

and Princes of those regions; in truth they possess all the great treasures of the world.

In this kingdom also are made the best and most delicate buckrams, and those of highest price; in sooth they look like tissue of spider's web! There is no King nor Queen in the world but might be glad to wear them. The people have also the largest sheep in the world, and great abundance of all the necessaries of life.

There is now no more to say; so I will next tell you about a province called Lar from which the Brahmans come.

CHAPTER XX

Concerning the Province of Lar whence the Brahmans come

Lar is a Province lying towards the west when you quit the place where the Body of St. Thomas lies; and all the *Brahmans* in the world come from that province.

You must know that these Brahmans are the best merchants in the world, and the most truthful, for they would not tell a lie for anything on earth. [If a foreign merchant who does not know the ways of the country applies to them and entrusts his goods to them, they will take charge of these, and sell them in the most loyal manner, seeking zealously the profit of the foreigner and asking no commission except what he pleases to bestow.] They eat no flesh, and drink no wine, and live a life of great chastity, having intercourse with no women except with their wives; nor would they on any account take what belongs to another; so their law commands. And they are all distinguished by wearing a thread of cotton over one shoulder and tied under the other arm, so that it crosses the breast and the back.

They have a rich and powerful King who is eager to purchase precious stones and large pearls; and he sends these Brahman merchants into the kingdom of Maabar

called Sola, which is the best and noblest Province of India, and where the best pearls are found, to fetch him as many of these as they can get, and he pays them double the cost price for all. So in this way he has a vast treasure of such valuables.

These Brahmans are Idolaters; and they pay greater heed to signs and omens than any people that exists. I will mention as an example one of their customs. To every day of the week they assign an augury of this sort. Suppose that there is some purchase in hand, he who proposes to buy, when he gets up in the morning takes note of his own shadow in the sun, which he says ought to be on that day of such and such a length; and if his shadow be of the proper length for the day he completes his purchase; if not, he will on no account do so, but waits till his shadow corresponds with that prescribed. For there is a length established for the shadow for every individual day of the week; and the merchant will complete no business unless he finds his shadow of the length set down for that particular day. [Also to each day in the week they assign one unlucky hour, which they term *Choiach*. For example, on Monday the hour of Half-tierce, on Tuesday that of Tierce, on Wednesday Nones, and so on.]

Again, if one of them is in the house, and is meditating a purchase, should he see a tarantula (such as are very common in that country) on the wall, provided it advances from a quarter that he deems lucky, he will complete his purchase at once; but if it comes from a quarter that he considers unlucky he will not do so on any inducement. Moreover, if in going out, he hears any one sneeze, if it seems to him a good omen he will go on, but if the reverse he will sit down on the spot where he is, as long as he thinks that he ought to tarry before going on again. Or, if in travelling along the road he sees a swallow fly by, should its direction be lucky he will proceed, but if not he will turn back again; in fact they are worse (in these whims) than so many Patarins!

These Brahmans are very long-lived, owing to their extreme abstinence in eating. And they never allow themselves to be let blood in any part of the body. They have capital teeth, which is owing to a certain herb they chew, which greatly improves their appearance, and is also very good for the health.

There is another class of people called *Yogi*, who are indeed properly Brahmans, but they form a religious order devoted to the Idols. They are extremely long-lived, every man of them living to 150 or 200 years. They eat very little, but what they do eat is good; rice and milk chiefly. And these people make use of a very strange beverage; for they make a potion of sulphur and quicksilver mixt together and this they drink twice every month. This, they say, gives them long life; and it is a potion they are used to take from their childhood.

There are certain members of this Order who lead the most ascetic life in the world, going stark naked; and these worship the Ox. Most of them have a small ox of brass or pewter or gold which they wear tied over the forehead. Moreover they take cow-dung and burn it, and make a powder thereof; and make an ointment of it, and daub themselves withal, doing this with as great devotion as Christians do show in using Holy Water. [Also if they meet any one who treats them well, they daub a little of this powder on the middle of his forehead.]

They eat not from bowls or trenchers, but put their victuals on leaves of the Apple of Paradise and other big leaves; these, however, they use dry, never green. For they say the green leaves have a soul in them, and so it would be a sin. And they would rather die than do what they deem their Law pronounces to be sin. If any one asks how it comes that they are not ashamed to go stark naked as they do, they say, "We go naked because naked we came into the world, and we desire to have nothing about us that is of this world. Moreover, we have no sin of the flesh to be conscious of, and therefore we are

not ashamed of our nakedness, any more than you are to show your hand or your face. You who are conscious of the sins of the flesh do well to have shame, and to cover your nakedness."

They would not kill an animal on any account, not even a fly, or a flea, or a louse, or anything in fact that has life; for they say these have all souls, and it would be sin to do so. They eat no vegetable in a green state, only such as are dry. And they sleep on the ground stark naked, without a scrap of clothing on them or under them, so that it is a marvel they don't all die, in place of living so long as I have told you. They fast every day in the year, and drink nought but water. And when a novice has to be received among them they keep him awhile in their convent, and make him follow their rule of life. And then, when they desire to put him to the test, they send for some of those girls who are devoted to the Idols, and make them try the continence of the novice with their blandishments. If he remains indifferent they retain him, but if he shows any emotion they expel him from their society. For they say they will have no man of loose desires among them.

They are such cruel and perfidious Idolaters that it is very devilry! They say that they burn the bodies of the dead, because if they were not burnt worms would be bred which would eat the body; and when no more food remained for them these worms would die, and the soul belonging to that body would bear the sin and the punishment of their death. And that is why they burn their dead!

Now I have told you about a great part of the people of the great Province of Maabar and their customs; but I have still other things to tell of this same Province of Maabar, so I will speak of a city thereof which is called Kayal.

CHAPTER XXI

Concerning the City of Kayal

Kayal is a great and noble city, and belongs to Ashar, the eldest of the five brother Kings. It is at this city that all the ships touch that come from the west, as from Ormuz and from Kish and from Aden, and all Arabia, laden with horses and with other things for sale. And this brings a great concourse of people from the country round about, and so there is great business done in this city of Kayal.

The King possesses vast treasures, and wears upon his person great store of rich jewels. He maintains great state and administers his kingdom with great equity, and extends great favour to merchants and foreigners, so that they are very glad to visit his city.

This King has some 300 wives; for in those parts the man who has most wives is most thought of.

As I told you before, there are in this great province of Maabar five crowned Kings, who are all own brothers born of one father and of one mother, and this king is one of them. Their mother is still living. And when they disagree and go forth to war against one another, their mother throws herself between them to prevent their fighting. And should they persist in desiring to fight, she will take a knife and threaten that if they will do so she will cut off the paps that suckled them and rip open the womb that bare them, and so perish before their eyes. In this way hath she full many a time brought them to desist. But when she dies it will most assuredly happen that they will fall out and destroy one another.

[All the people of this city, as well as of the rest of India, have a custom of perpetually keeping in the mouth a certain leaf called *Tembul*, to gratify a certain habit and desire they have, continually chewing it and spitting

out the saliva that it excites. The Lords and gentlefolks and the King have these leaves prepared with camphor and other aromatic spices, and also mixt with quicklime. And this practice was said to be very good for the health. If any one desires to offer a gross insult to another, when he meets him he spits this leaf or its juice in his face. The other immediately runs before the King, relates the insult that has been offered him, and demands leave to fight the offender. The King supplies the arms, which are sword and target, and all the people flock to see, and there the two fight till one of them is killed. They must not use the point of the sword, for this the King forbids.]

CHAPTER XXII

Of the Kingdom of Quilon

When you quit Maabar and go 500 miles towards the south-west you come to the kingdom of Quilon. The people are Idolaters, but there are also some Christians and some Jews. The natives have a language of their own, and a King of their own, and are tributary to no one.

A great deal of brazil is got here which is called *brazil Colombin* from the country which produces it; 'tis of very fine quality. Good ginger also grows here, and it is known by the same name of *Colombin* after the country. Pepper too grows in great abundance throughout this country, and I will tell you how. You must know that the pepper-trees are (not wild but) cultivated, being regularly planted and watered; and the pepper is gathered in the months of May, June, and July. They have also abundance of very fine indigo. This is made of a certain herb which is gathered, and [after the roots have been removed] is put into great vessels upon which they pour water and then leave it till the whole of the plant is de-

composed. They then put this liquid in the sun, which is tremendously hot there, so that it boils and coagulates, and becomes such as we see it. [They then divide it into pieces of four ounces each, and in that form it is exported to our parts.] And I assure you that the heat of the sun is so great there that it is scarcely to be endured; in fact if you put an egg into one of the rivers it will be boiled, before you have had time to go any distance, by the mere heat of the sun!

The merchants from Manzi, and from Arabia, and from the Levant come thither with their ships and their merchandize and make great profits both by what they import and by what they export.

There are in this country many and divers beasts quite different from those of other parts of the world. Thus there are lions black all over, with no mixture of any other colour; and there are parrots of many sorts, for some are white as snow with red beak and feet, and some are red, and some are blue, forming the most charming sight in the world; there are green ones too. There are also some parrots of exceeding small size, beautiful creatures. They have also very beautiful peacocks, larger than ours, and different; and they have cocks and hens quite different from ours; and what more shall I say? In short, everything they have is different from ours, and finer and better. Neither is their fruit like ours, nor their beasts, nor their birds; and this difference all comes of the excessive heat.

Grain they have none but rice. So also their wine they make from [palm-] sugar; capital drink it is, and very speedily it makes a man drunk. All other necessaries of man's life they have in great plenty and cheapness. They have very good astrologers and physicians. Man and woman, they are all black, and go naked, all save a fine cloth worn about the middle. They look not on any sin of the flesh as a sin. They marry their cousins german, and a man takes his brother's wife after the

brother's death; and all the people of India have this custom.

There is no more to tell you there; so we will proceed, and I will tell you of another country called Comorin.

CHAPTER XXIII

Of the Country called Comorin

Comorin is a country belonging to India, and there you can see something of the North Star, which we had not been able to see from the Lesser Java thus far. In order to see it you must go some 30 miles out to sea, and then you see it about a cubit above the water.

This is a very wild country, and there are beasts of all kinds there, especially monkeys of such peculiar fashion that you would take them for men! There are also *paul-cats* in wonderful diversity, with bears, lions, and leopards, in abundance.

CHAPTER XXIV

Concerning the Kingdom of Ely

Ely is a kingdom towards the west, about 300 miles from Comorin. The people are Idolaters and have a king, and are tributary to nobody; and have a peculiar language. We will tell you particulars about their manners and their products, and you will better understand things now because we are drawing near to places that are not so outlandish.

There is no proper harbour in the country, but there are many great rivers with good estuaries, wide and deep. Pepper and ginger grow there, and other spices in quantities. The King is rich in treasure, but not very strong in forces. The approach to his kingdom however is so strong by nature that no one can attack him, so he is afraid of nobody.

And you must know that if any ship enters their estuary and anchors there, having been bound for some other port, they seize her and plunder the cargo. For they say, "You were bound for somewhere else, and 'tis God has sent you hither to us, so we have a right to all your goods." And they think it no sin to act thus. And this naughty custom prevails all over these provinces of India, to wit, that if a ship be driven by stress of weather into some other port than that to which it was bound, it is sure to be plundered. But if a ship come bound originally to the place they receive it with all honour and give it due protection. The ships of Manzi and other countries that come hither in summer lay in their cargoes in 6 or 8 days and depart as fast as possible, because there is no harbour other than the river-mouth, a mere roadstead and sandbanks, so that it is perilous to tarry there. The ships of Manzi indeed are not so much afraid of these roadsteads as others are, because they have such huge wooden anchors which hold in all weather.

There are many lions and other wild beasts here and plenty of game, both beast and bird.

CHAPTER XXV

Concerning the Kingdom of Malabar

Malabar is a great kingdom lying towards the west. The people are Idolaters; they have a language of their own, and a king of their own, and pay tribute to nobody.

In this country you see more of the North Star, for it shows two cubits above the water. And you must know that from this kingdom of Malabar, and from another near it called Guzerat, there go forth every year more than a hundred corsair vessels on cruize. These pirates take with them their wives and children, and stay out the whole summer. Their method is to join in fleets of 20 or 30 of these pirate vessels together, and

then they form what they call a sea cordon, that is, they drop off till there is an interval of 5 or 6 miles between ship and ship, so that they cover something like an hundred miles of sea, and no merchant ship can escape them. For when any one corsair sights a vessel a signal is made by fire or smoke, and then the whole of them make for this, and seize the merchants and plunder them. After they have plundered them they let them go, saying: "Go along with you and get more gain, and that mayhap will fall to us also!" But now the merchants are aware of this, and go so well manned and armed, and with such great ships, that they don't fear the corsairs. Still mishaps do befall them at times.

There is in this kingdom a great quantity of pepper, and ginger, and cinnamon, and turbit, and of nuts of India. They also manufacture very delicate and beautiful buckrams. The ships that come from the east bring copper in ballast. They also bring hither cloths of silk and gold, and taffetas; also gold and silver, cloves and spikenard, and other fine spices for which there is a demand here, and exchange them for the products of these countries.

Ships come hither from many quarters, but especially from the great province of Manzi. Coarse spices are exported hence both to Manzi and to the west, and that which is carried by the merchants to Aden goes on to Alexandria, but the ships that go in the latter direction are not one to ten of those that go to the eastward; a very notable fact that I have mentioned before.

Now I have told you about the kingdom of Malabar; we shall now proceed and tell you of the kingdom of Guzerat. And you must understand that in speaking of these kingdoms we note only the capitals; there are great numbers of other cities and towns of which we shall say nothing, because it would make too long a story to speak of all.

CHAPTER XXVI

Concerning the Kingdom of Guzerat

Guzerat is a great kingdom. The people are Idolaters and have a peculiar language, and a king of their own, and are tributary to no one. It lies towards the west, and the North Star is here still more conspicuous, showing itself at an altitude of about 6 cubits.

The people are the most desperate pirates in existence, and one of their atrocious practices is this. When they have taken a merchant-vessel they force the merchants to swallow a stuff called *tamarind* mixed in sea-water, which produces a violent purging. This is done in case the merchants, on seeing their danger, should have swallowed their most valuable stones and pearls. And in this way the pirates secure the whole.

In this province of Guzerat there grows much pepper, and ginger, and indigo. They have also a great deal of cotton. Their cotton trees are of very great size, growing full six paces high, and attaining to an age of 20 years. It is to be observed however that, when the trees are so old as that, the cotton is not good to spin, but only to quilt or stuff beds withal. Up to the age of 12 years indeed the trees give good spinning cotton, but from that age to 20 years the produce is inferior.

They dress in this country great numbers of skins of various kinds, goat-skins, ox-skins, buffalo and wild ox-skins, as well as those of unicorns and other animals. In fact so many are dressed every year as to load a number of ships for Arabia and other quarters. They also work here beautiful mats in red and blue leather, exquisitely inlaid with figures of birds and beasts, and skilfully embroidered with gold and silver wire. These are marvellously beautiful things; they are used by the Saracens to sleep upon, and capital they are for that purpose. They also work cushions embroidered with

gold, so fine that they are worth six marks of silver apiece, whilst some of those sleeping-mats are worth ten marks.

CHAPTER XXVII

Concerning the Kingdom of Tana

Tana is a great kingdom lying towards the west, a kingdom great both in size and worth. The people are Idolaters, with a language of their own, and a king of their own, and tributary to nobody. No pepper grows there, nor other spices, but plenty of incense; not the white kind however, but brown.

There is much traffic here, and many ships and merchants frequent the place; for there is a great export of leather of various excellent kinds, and also of good buckram and cotton. The merchants in their ships also import various articles, such as gold, silver, copper, and other things in demand.

With the King's connivance many corsairs launch from this port to plunder merchants. These corsairs have a covenant with the King that he shall get all the horses they capture, and all other plunder shall remain with them. The King does this because he has no horses of his own, whilst many are shipped from abroad towards India; for no ship ever goes thither without horses in addition to other cargo. The practice is naughty and unworthy of a king.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Concerning the Kingdom of Cambay

Cambay is a great kingdom lying further west. The people are Idolaters, and have a language of their own, and a king of their own, and are tributary to nobody.

The North Star is here still more clearly visible; and henceforward the further you go west the higher you see it.

There is a great deal of trade in this country. It produces indigo in great abundance; and they also make much fine buckram. There is also a quantity of cotton which is exported hence to many quarters; and there is a great trade in hides, which are very well dressed; with many other kinds of merchandize too tedious to mention. Merchants come here with many ships and cargoes, but what they chiefly bring is gold, silver, copper [and tutty].

There are no pirates from this country; the inhabitants are good people, and live by their trade and manufactures.

CHAPTER XXIX

Concerning the Kingdom of Somnath

Somnath is a great kingdom towards the west. The people are Idolaters, and have a king and a language of their own, and pay tribute to nobody. They are not corsairs, but live by trade and industry as honest people ought. It is a place of very great trade. They are forsooth cruel Idolaters.

CHAPTER XXX

Concerning the Kingdom of Kijmekran

Kijmekran is a kingdom having a king of its own and a peculiar language. [Some of] the people are Idolaters, [but the most part are Saracens]. They live by merchandize and industry, for they are professed traders, and carry on much traffic by sea and land in all directions. Their food is rice [and wheat], flesh and milk, of which they have great store. There is no more to be said about them.

And you must know that this kingdom of KIJMEKRAN is the last in India as you go towards the west and north-west. You see, from Maabar on, this province is what is called the GREATER INDIA, and it is the best of all the Indies. I have now detailed to you all the kingdoms and provinces and (chief) cities of this India the Greater, that are upon the seaboard; but of those that lie in the interior I have said nothing, because that would make too long a story.

And so now let us proceed, and I will tell you of some of the Indian Islands. And I will begin by two Islands which are called Male and Female.

CHAPTER XXXI

DISCOURSETH OF THE TWO ISLANDS CALLED MALE AND FEMALE, AND WHY THEY ARE SO CALLED

WHEN you leave this kingdom of Kijmekran, which is on the mainland, you go by sea some 500 miles towards the south; and then you find the two Islands, MALE and FEMALE, lying about 30 miles distant from one another. The people are all baptized Christians, but maintain the ordinances of the Old Testament; thus when their wives are with child they never go near them till their confinement, or for forty days thereafter.

In the Island however which is called Male, dwell the men alone, without their wives or any other women. Every year when the month of March arrives the men all set out for the other Island, and tarry there for three months, to wit, March, April, May, dwelling with their wives for that space. At the end of those three months they return to their own Island, and pursue their husbandry and trade for the other nine months.

They find on this Island very fine ambergris. They live on flesh and milk and rice. They are capital fishermen, and catch a great quantity of fine large sea-fish, and

these they dry, so that all the year they have plenty of food, and also enough to sell to the traders who go thither. They have no chief except a bishop, who is subject to the archbishop of another Island, of which we shall presently speak, called SOCOTRA. They have also a peculiar language.

As for the children which their wives bear to them, if they be girls they abide with their mothers; but if they be boys the mothers bring them up till they are fourteen, and then send them to the fathers. Such is the custom of these two Islands. The wives do nothing but nurse their children and gather such fruits as their Island produces; for their husbands do furnish them with all necessaries.

CHAPTER XXXII

CONCERNING THE ISLAND OF SOCOTRA

WHEN you leave those two Islands and go about 500 miles further towards the south, then you come to an Island called SOCOTRA. The people are all baptized Christians; and they have an Archbishop. They have a great deal of ambergris; and plenty also of cotton stuffs and other merchandize; especially great quantities of salt fish of a large and excellent kind. They also eat flesh and milk and rice, for that is their only kind of corn; and they all go naked like the other Indians.

[The ambergris comes from the stomach of the whale, and as it is a great object of trade, the people contrive to take the whales with barbed iron darts, which, once they are fixed in the body, cannot come out again. A long cord is attached to this end, to that a small buoy which floats on the surface, so that when the whale dies they know where to find it. They then draw the body ashore and extract the ambergris from the stomach and the oil from the head.]

There is a great deal of trade there, for many ships

come from all quarters with goods to sell to the natives. The merchants also purchase gold there, by which they make a great profit; and all the vessels bound for Aden touch at this Island.

Their Archbishop has nothing to do with the Pope of Rome, but is subject to the great Archbishop who lives at Bagdad. He rules over the Bishop of that Island, and over many other Bishops in those regions of the world, just as our Pope does in these.

A multitude of corsairs frequent the Island; they come there and encamp and put up their plunder to sale; and this they do to good profit, for the Christians of the Island purchase it, knowing well that it is Saracen or Pagan gear.

And you must know that in this Island there are the best enchanters in the world. It is true that their Archbishop forbids the practice to the best of his ability; but 'tis all to no purpose, for they insist that their forefathers followed it, and so must they also. I will give you a sample of their enchantments. Thus, if a ship be sailing past with a fair wind and a strong, they will raise a contrary wind and compel her to turn back. In fact they make the wind blow as they list, and produce great tempests and disasters; and other such sorceries they perform, which it will be better to say nothing about in our Book.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Concerning the Island of Madagascar

Madagascar is an Island towards the south, about a thousand miles from Socotra. The people are all Saracens, adoring Mahommet. They have four *Sheikhs*, *i.e.* four Elders, who are said to govern the whole Island. And you must know that it is a most noble and beautiful Island, and one of the greatest in the world, for it is about 4000 miles in compass. The people live by trade and handicrafts.

In this Island, and in another beyond it called ZANZIBAR, about which we shall tell you afterwards, there are more elephants than in any country in the world. The amount of traffic in elephants' teeth in these two Islands is something astonishing.

In this Island they eat no flesh but that of camels; and of these they kill an incredible number daily. They say it is the best and wholesomest of all flesh; and so they eat of it all the year round.

They have in this Island many trees of red sanders, of excellent quality; in fact, all their forests consist of it. They have also a quantity of ambergris, for whales are abundant in that sea, and they catch numbers of them; and so are *Oil-heads*, which are a huge kind of fish, which also produce ambergris like the whale. There are numbers of leopards, bears, and lions in the country, and other wild beasts in abundance. Many traders, and many ships go thither with cloths of gold and silk and many other kinds of goods, and drive a profitable trade.

You must know that this Island lies so far south that ships cannot go further south or visit other Islands in that direction, except this one, and that other of which we have to tell you, called Zanzibar. This is because the sea-current runs so strong towards the south that the ships which should attempt it never would get back again. Indeed, the ships of Maabar which visit this Island of Madagascar, and that other of Zanzibar, arrive thither with marvellous speed, for great as the distance is they accomplish it in 20 days, whilst the return voyage takes them more than 3 months. This (I say) is because of the strong current running south, which continues with such singular force and in the same direction at all seasons.

'Tis said that in those other Islands to the south, which the ships are unable to visit because this strong current prevents their return, is found the bird *Griffin*,

which appears there at certain seasons. The description given of it is however entirely different from what our stories and pictures make it. For persons who had been there and had seen it told Messer Marco Polo that it was for all the world like an eagle, but one indeed of enormous size; so big in fact that its wings covered an extent of 30 paces, and its quills were 12 paces long, and thick in proportion. And it is so strong that it will seize an elephant in its talons and carry him high into the air, and drop him so that he is smashed to pieces; having so killed him the bird griffin swoops down on him and eats him at leisure. The people of those isles call the bird *Roc*, and it has no other name. So I wot not if this be the real griffin, or if there be another manner of bird as great. But this I can tell you for certain, that they are not half lion and half bird as our stories do relate; but enormous as they be they are fashioned just like an eagle.

The Great Khan sent to those parts to enquire about these curious matters, and the story was told by those who went thither. He also sent to procure the release of an envoy of his who had been despatched thither, and had been detained; so both those envoys had many wonderful things to tell the Great Khan about those strange islands, and about the birds I have mentioned. [They brought (as I heard) to the Great Khan a feather of the said Roc, which was stated to measure 90 spans, whilst the quill part was two palms in circumference, a marvellous object! The Great Khan was delighted with it, and gave great presents to those who brought it.] They also brought two boars' tusks, which weighed more than 14 lbs. apiece; and you may gather how big the boar must have been that had teeth like that! They related indeed that there were some of those boars as big as a great buffalo. There are also numbers of giraffes and wild asses; and in fact a marvellous number of wild beasts of strange aspect.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Concerning the Island of Zanzibar. A Word on India in General

Zanzibar is a great and noble Island, with a compass of some 2000 miles. The people are all Idolaters, and have a king and a language of their own, and pay tribute to nobody. They are both tall and stout, but not tall in proportion to their stoutness, for if they were, being so stout and brawny, they would be absolutely like giants; and they are so strong that they will carry for four men and eat for five.

They are all black, and go stark naked, with only a little covering for decency. Their hair is as black as pepper, and so frizzly that even with water you can scarcely straighten it. And their mouths are so large, their noses so turned up, their lips so thick, their eyes so big and bloodshot, that they look like very devils; they are in fact so hideously ugly that the world has nothing to show more horrible.

Elephants are produced in this country in wonderful profusion. There are also lions that are black and quite different from ours. And their sheep and wethers are all exactly alike in colour; the body all white and the head black; no other kind of sheep is found there, you may rest assured. They have also many giraffes. This is a beautiful creature, and I must give you a description of it. Its body is short and somewhat sloped to the rear, for its hind legs are short whilst the fore-legs and the neck are both very long, and thus its head stands about three paces from the ground. The head is small, and the animal is not at all mischievous. Its colour is all red and white in round spots, and it is really a beautiful object.

The women of this Island are the ugliest in the world, with their great mouths and big eyes and thick noses;

their breasts too are four times bigger than those of any other women; a very disgusting sight.

The people live on rice and flesh and milk and dates; and they make wine of dates and of rice and of good spices and sugar. There is a great deal of trade, and many merchants and vessels go thither. But the staple trade of the Island is in elephants' teeth, which are very abundant; and they have also much ambergris, as whales are plentiful.

They have among them excellent and valiant warriors, and have little fear of death. They have no horses, but fight mounted on camels and elephants. On the latter they set wooden castles which carry from ten to sixteen persons, armed with lances, swords, and stones, so that they fight to great purpose from these castles. They wear no armour, but carry only a shield of hide, besides their swords and lances, and so a marvellous number of them fall in battle. When they are going to take an elephant into battle they ply him well with their wine, so that he is made half drunk. They do this because the drink makes him more fierce and bold, and of more service in battle.

As there is no more to say on this subject I will go on to tell you about the Great Province of Abash, which constitutes the Middle India;—but I must first say something about India in general.

You must understand that in speaking of the Indian Islands we have described only the most noble provinces and kingdoms among them; for no man on earth could give you a true account of the whole of the Islands of India. Still, what I have described are the best, and as it were the Flower of the Indies. For the greater part of the other Indian Islands that I have omitted are subject to those that I have described. It is a fact that in this Sea of India there are 12,700 Islands, inhabited and uninhabited, according to the charts and documents of experienced mariners who navigate that Indian Sea.

India the Greater is that which extends from Maabar to Kijmekran; and it contains 13 great kingdoms, of which we have described ten. These are all on the mainland.

India the Lesser extends from the Province of Champa to Motupalli, and contains eight great kingdoms. These are likewise all on the mainland. And neither of these numbers includes the Islands, among which also there are very numerous kingdoms, as I have told you.

CHAPTER XXXV

Treating of the Great Province of Abash which is Middle India, and is on the Mainland

Abash is a very great Province, and you must know that it constitutes the Middle India; and it is on the mainland. There are in it six great Kings with six great Kingdoms; and of these six Kings there are three that are Christians and three that are Saracens; but the greatest of all the six is a Christian, and all the others are subject to him.

The Christians in this country bear three marks on the face; one from the forehead to the middle of the nose, and one on either cheek. These marks are made with a hot iron, and form part of their baptism; for after that they have been baptized with water, these three marks are made, partly as a token of gentility, and partly as the completion of their baptism. There are also Jews in the country, and these bear two marks, one on either cheek; and the Saracens have but one, to wit, on the forehead extending halfway down the nose.

The Great King lives in the middle of the country; the Saracens towards Aden. St. Thomas the Apostle preached in this region, and after he had converted the people he went away to the province of Maabar, where he died; and there his body lies, as I have told you in a former place.

The people here are excellent soldiers, and they go on horseback, for they have horses in plenty. Well they may; for they are in daily war with the Sultan of ADEN, and with the Nubians, and a variety of other nations. I will tell you a famous story of what befel in the year of Christ 1288.

You must know that this Christian King, who is the Lord of the Province of Abash, declared his intention to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem to adore the Holy Sepulchre of Our Lord God Jesus Christ the Saviour. But his Barons said that for him to go in person would be to run too great a risk; and they recommended him to send some bishop or prelate in his stead. So the King assented to the counsel which his Barons gave, and despatched a certain Bishop of his, a man of very holy life. The Bishop then departed and travelled by land and by sea till he arrived at the Holy Sepulchre, and there he paid it such honour as Christian man is bound to do, and presented a great offering on the part of his King who had sent him in his own stead.

And when he had done all that behoved him, he set out again and travelled day by day till he got to Aden. Now that is a Kingdom wherein Christians are held in great detestation, for the people are all Saracens, and their enemies unto the death. So when the Sultan of Aden heard that this man was a Christian and a Bishop, and an envoy of the Great King of Abash, he had him seized and demanded of him if he were a Christian? To this the Bishop replied that he was a Christian indeed. The Sultan then told him that unless he would turn to the Law of Mahommet he should work him great shame and dishonour. The Bishop answered that they might kill him ere he would deny his Creator.

When the Sultan heard that he waxed wroth, and ordered that the Bishop should be circumcised. So they took and circumcised him after the manner of the Saracens. And then the Sultan told him that he had

been thus put to shame in despite to the King his master. And so they let him go.

The Bishop was sorely cut to the heart for the shame that had been wrought him, but he took comfort because it had befallen him in holding fast by the Law of Our Lord Jesus Christ; and the Lord God would recompense his soul in the world to come.

So when he was healed he set out and travelled by land and by sea till he reached the King his Lord in the Kingdom of Abash. And when the King beheld him, he welcomed him with great joy and gladness. And he asked him all about the Holy Sepulchre; and the Bishop related all about it truly, the King listening the while as to a most holy matter in all faith. But when the Bishop had told all about Jerusalem, he then related the outrage done on him by the Sultan of Aden in the King's despite. Great was the King's wrath and grief when he heard that; and it so disturbed him that he was like to die of vexation. And at length his words waxed so loud that all those round about could hear what he was saying. He vowed that he would never wear crown or hold kingdom if he took not such condign vengeance on the Sultan of Aden that all the world should ring therewithal, even until the insult had been well and thoroughly redressed.

And what shall I say of it? He straightway caused the array of his horse and foot to be mustered, and great numbers of elephants with castles to be prepared to accompany them; and when all was ready he set out with his army and advanced till he entered the Kingdom of Aden in great force. The Kings of this province of Aden were well aware of the King's advance against them, and went to encounter him at the strongest pass on their frontier, with a great force of armed men, in order to bar the enemy from entering their territory. When the King arrived at this strong pass where the Saracens had taken post, a battle began, fierce and fell on both sides, for they were very bitter against each other. But

it came to pass, as it pleased our Lord God Jesus Christ, that the Kings of the Saracens, who were three in number, could not stand against the Christians, for they are not such good soldiers as the Christians are. So the Saracens were defeated, and a marvellous number of them slain, and the King of Abash entered the Kingdom of Aden with all his host. The Saracens made various sallies on them in the narrow defiles, but it availed nothing; they were always beaten and slain. And when the King had greatly wasted and destroyed the kingdom of his enemy, and had remained in it more than a month with all his host, continually slaying the Saracens, and ravaging their lands (so that great numbers of them perished), he thought it time to return to his own kingdom, which he could now do with great honour. Indeed he could tarry no longer, nor could he, as he was aware, do more injury to the enemy; for he would have had to force a way by still stronger passes, where, in the narrow defiles, a handful of men might cause him heavy loss. So he quitted the enemy's Kingdom of Aden and began to retire. And he with his host got back to their own country of Abash in great triumph and rejoicing; for he had well avenged the shame cast on him and on his Bishop for his sake. For they had slain so many Saracens, and so wasted and harried the land, that 'twas something to be astonished at. And in sooth 'twas a deed well done! For it is not to be borne that the dogs of Saracens should lord it over good Christian people! Now you have heard the story.

I have still some particulars to tell you of the same province. It abounds greatly in all kinds of victual; and the people live on flesh and rice and milk and sesamê. They have plenty of elephants, not that they are bred in the country, but they are brought from the Islands of the other India. They have however many giraffes, which are produced in the country; besides bears, leopards, lions in abundance, and many other passing strange beasts. They have also numerous wild asses; and cocks

and hens the most beautiful that exist, and many other kind of birds. For instance, they have ostriches that are nearly as big as asses; and plenty of beautiful parrots, with apes of sundry kinds, and baboons and other monkeys that have countenances all but human.

There are numerous cities and villages in this province of Abash, and many merchants; for there is much trade to be done there. The people also manufacture very fine buckrams and other cloths of cotton.

There is no more to say on the subject; so now let us go forward and tell you of the province of Aden.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Concerning the Province of Aden

You must know that in the province of Aden there is a Prince who is called the Sultan. The people are all Saracens and adorers of Mahommet, and have a great hatred of Christians. There are many towns and villages in the country.

This Aden is the port to which many of the ships of India come with their cargoes; and from this haven the merchants carry the goods a distance of seven days further in small vessels. At the end of those seven days they land the goods and load them on camels, and so carry them a land journey of 30 days. This brings them to the river of Alexandria, and by it they descend to the latter city. It is by this way through Aden that the Saracens of Alexandria receive all their stores of pepper and other spicery; and there is no other route equally good and convenient by which these goods could reach that place.

And you must know that the Sultan of Aden receives a large amount in duties from the ships that traffic between India and his country, importing different kinds of goods; and from the exports also he gets a revenue,

for there are despatched from the port of Aden to India a very large number of Arab chargers, and palfreys, and stout nags adapted for all work, which are a source of great profit to those who export them. For horses fetch very high prices in India, there being none bred there, as I have told you before; insomuch that a charger will sell there for 100 marks of silver and more. On these also the Sultan of Aden receives heavy payments in port charges, so that 'tis said he is one of the richest princes in the world.

And it is a fact that when the Sultan of Babylon went against the city of Acre and took it, this Sultan of Aden sent to his assistance 30,000 horsemen and full 40,000 camels, to the great help of the Saracens and the grievous injury of the Christians. He did this a great deal more for the hate he bears the Christians than for any love he bears the Sultan of Babylon; for these two do hate one another heartily.

Now we will have done with the Sultan of Aden, and I will tell you of a city which is subject to Aden, called Es-Sheher.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Concerning the City of Es-Sheher

Es-Sheher is a great city lying in a north-westerly direction from the last, and 400 miles distant from the Port of Aden. It has a king, who is subject to the Sultan of Aden. He has a number of towns and villages under him, and administers his territory well and justly.

The people are Saracens. The place has a very good haven, wherefore many ships from India come thither with various cargoes; and they export many good chargers thence to India.

A great deal of white incense grows in this country, and brings in a great revenue to the Prince; for no one dares sell it to any one else; and whilst he takes it from

the people at 10 livres of gold for the hundredweight, he sells it to the merchants at 60 livres, so his profit is immense.

Dates also grow very abundantly here. The people have no grain but rice, and very little of that; but plenty is brought from abroad, for it sells here at a good profit. They have fish in great profusion, and notably plenty of tunny of large size; so plentiful indeed that you may buy two big ones for a Venice groat of silver. The natives live on meat and rice and fish. They have no wine of the vine, but they make good wine from sugar, from rice, and from dates also.

And I must tell you another very strange thing. You must know that their sheep have no ears, but where the ear ought to be they have a little horn! They are pretty little beasts.

And I must not omit to tell you that all their cattle, including horses, oxen, and camels, live upon small fish and nought besides, for 'tis all they get to eat. You see in all this country there is no grass or forage of any kind; it is the driest country on the face of the earth. The fish which are given to the cattle are very small, and during March, April, and May, are caught in such quantities as would astonish you. They are then dried and stored, and the beasts are fed on them from year's end to year's end. The cattle will also readily eat these fish all alive and just out of the water.

The people here have likewise many other kinds of fish of large size and good quality, exceedingly cheap; these they cut in pieces of about a pound each, and dry them in the sun, and then store them, and eat them all the year through, like so much biscuit.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Concerning the City of Dhafar

Dhafar is a great and noble and fine city, and lies 500 miles to the north-west of Es-Sheher. The people are Saracens, and have a Count for their chief, who is subject to the Sultan of Aden; for this city still belongs to the Province of Aden. It stands upon the sea and has a very good haven, so that there is a great traffic of shipping between this and India; and the merchants take hence great numbers of Arab horses to that market, making great profits thereby. This city has under it many other towns and villages.

Much white incense is produced here, and I will tell you how it grows. The trees are like small fir-trees; these are notched with a knife in several places, and from these notches the incense is exuded. Sometimes also it flows from the tree without any notch; this is by reason of the great heat of the sun there.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Concerning the Gulf of Kalhat and the City so called

Kalhat is a great city, within a gulf which bears the name of the Gulf of Kalhat. It is a noble city, and lies 600 miles from Dhafar towards the north-west, upon the sea-shore. The people are Saracens, and are subject to Ormuz. And whenever the Melic of Ormuz is at war with some prince more potent than himself, he betakes himself to this city of Kalhat, because it is very strong, both from its position and its fortifications.

They grow no grain here, but get it from abroad; for every merchant-vessel that comes brings some. The haven is very large and good, and is frequented by nu-

merous ships with goods from India, and from this city the spices and other merchandize are distributed among the cities and towns of the interior. They also export many good Arab horses from this to India. For, as I have told you before, the number of horses exported from this and the other cities to India yearly is something astonishing. One reason is that no horses are bred there, and another that they die as soon as they get there, through ignorant handling; for the people there do not know how to take care of them, and they feed their horses with cooked victuals and all sorts of trash, as I have told you fully heretofore; and besides all that they have no farriers.

This City of Kalhat stands at the mouth of the Gulf, so that no ship can enter or go forth without the will of the chief. And when the Melic of Ormuz, who is Melic of Kalhat also, and is vassal to the Sultan of Kirman, fears anything at the hand of the latter, he gets on board his ships and comes from Ormuz to Kalhat. And then he prevents any ship from entering the Gulf. This causes great injury to the Sultan of Kirman; for he thus loses all the duties that he is wont to receive from merchants frequenting his territories from India or elsewhere; for ships with cargoes or merchandize come in great numbers, and a very large revenue is derived from them. In this way he is constrained to give way to the demands of the Melic of Ormuz.

This Melic has also a castle which is still stronger than the city, and has a better command of the entry to the Gulf.

The people of this country live on dates and salt fish, which they have in great abundance; the nobles, however, have better fare.

There is no more to say on this subject. So now let us go on and speak of the city of Ormuz, of which we told you before.

CHAPTER XL

Returns to the City of Ormuz whereof we spoke formerly

When you leave the City of Kalhat, and go for 300 miles between north-west and north, you come to the city of Ormuz; a great and noble city on the sea. It has a *Melic*, which is as much as to say a King, and he is under the Sultan of Kirman.

There are a good many cities and towns belonging to Ormuz, and the people are Saracens. The heat is tremendous, and on that account their houses are built with ventilators to catch the wind. These ventilators are placed on the side from which the wind comes, and they bring the wind down into the house to cool it. But for this the heat would be utterly unbearable.

I shall say no more about these places, because I formerly told you in regular order all about this same city of Ormuz, and about Kirman as well. But as we took one way to go, and another to come back, it was proper that we should bring you a second time to this point.

Now, however, we will quit this part of the world, and tell you about Great Turkey. First, however, there is a point that I have omitted; to wit, that when you leave the City of Kalhat and go between west and north-west, a distance of 500 miles, you come to the city of Kish. Of that, however, we shall say no more now, but pass it with this brief mention, and return to the subject of Great Turkey, of which you shall now hear.

BOOK FOURTH

WARS AMONG THE TARTAR PRINCES AND SOME ACCOUNT OF THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I

Concerning Great Turkey

In Great Turkey there is a king called Kaidu, who is the Great Khan's nephew, for he was the grandson of Jagatai, the Great Khan's own brother. He hath many cities and castles, and is a great Prince. He and his people are Tartars alike; and they are good soldiers, for they are constantly engaged in war.

Now this King Kaidu is never at peace with his uncle the Great Khan, but ever at deadly war with him, and he hath fought great battles with the Khan's armies. The quarrel between them arose out of this, that Kaidu demanded from the Great Khan the share of his father's conquests that of right belonged to him; and in particular he demanded a share of the Provinces of Cathay and Manzi. The Great Khan replied that he was willing enough to give him a share such as he gave to his own sons, but that he must first come on summons to the Council at the Khan's Court, and present himself as one of the Khan's liegemen. Kaidu, who did not trust his uncle very far, declined to come, but said that where he was he would hold himself ready to obey all the Khan's commands.

In truth, as he had several times been in revolt, he dreaded that the Khan might take the opportunity to destroy him. So, out of this quarrel between them, there arose a great war, and several great battles were fought by the host of Kaidu against the host of the Great Khan, his uncle. And the Great Khan from year's end to year's end keeps an army watching all Kaidu's frontier, lest he

should make forays on his dominions. He, natheless, will never cease his aggressions on the Great Khan's territory, and maintains a bold face to his enemies.

Indeed, he is so potent that he can well do so; for he can take the field with 100,000 horse, all stout soldiers and inured to war. He has also with him several Barons of the imperial lineage; *i.e.*, of the family of Jengis Khan, who was the first of their lords, and conquered a great part of the world, as I have told you more particularly in a former part of this Book.

Now you must know that Great Turkey lies towards the north-west when you travel from Ormuz by that road I described. It begins on the further bank of the River JIHUN, and extends northward to the territory of the Great Khan.

Now I shall tell you of sundry battles that the troops of Kaidu fought with the armies of the Great Khan.

CHAPTER II

OF CERTAIN BATTLES THAT WERE FOUGHT BY KING KAIDU AGAINST THE ARMIES OF HIS UNCLE THE GREAT KHAN

Now it came to pass in the year of Christ's incarnation, 1266, that this King Kaidu and another prince called YESUDAR, who was his cousin, assembled a great force and made an expedition to attack two of the Great Khan's Barons who held lands under the Great Khan, but were Kaidu's own kinsmen, for they were sons of Jagatai who was a baptized Christian, and own brother to the Great Khan; one of them was called CHIBAI, and the other CHIBAN.

Kaidu with all his host, amounting to 60,000 horse, engaged the Khan's two Barons, those cousins of his, who had also a great force amounting to more than 60,000 horsemen, and there was a great battle. In the end the Barons were beaten, and Kaidu and his people

won the day. Great numbers were slain on both sides, but the two brother Barons escaped, thanks to their good horses. So King Kaidu returned home swelling the more with pride and arrogance, and for the next two years he remained at peace, and made no further war against the Khan.

However, at the end of those two years King Kaidu assembled an army composed of a vast force of horsemen. He knew that at Karakorum was the Great Khan's son NUMUGHAN, and with him GEORGE, the grandson of Prester John. These two princes had also a great force of cavalry. And when King Kaidu was ready he set forth and crossed the frontier. After marching rapidly without any adventure, he got near Karakorum, where the Khan's son and the younger Prester John were awaiting him with their great army, for they were well aware of Kaidu's advance in force. They made them ready for battle like valiant men, and all undismayed, seeing that they had more than 60,000 well-appointed horsemen. And when they heard Kaidu was so near they went forth valiantly to meet him. When they got within some 10 miles of him they pitched their tents and got ready for battle, and the enemy who were about equal in numbers did the same; each side forming in six columns of 10,000 men with good captains. Both sides were well equipped with swords and maces and shields, with bows and arrows, and other arms after their fashion. You must know that the practice of the Tartars going to battle is to take each a bow and 60 arrows. Of these, 30 are light with small sharp points, for long shots and following up an enemy, whilst the other 30 are heavy, with large broad heads which they shoot at close quarters, and with which they inflict great gashes on face and arms, and cut the enemy's bowstrings, and commit great havoc. This every one is ordered to attend to. And when they have shot away their arrows they take to their swords and maces and lances, which also they ply stoutly.

So when both sides were ready for action the Naccaras began to sound loudly, one on either side. For 'tis their custom never to join battle till the Great Naccara is beaten. And when the Naccaras sounded, then the battle began in fierce and deadly style, and furiously the one host dashed to meet the other. So many fell on either side that in an evil hour for both it was begun! The earth was thickly strewn with the wounded and the slain, men and horses, whilst the uproar and din of battle was so loud you would not have heard God's thunder! Truly King Kaidu himself did many a deed of prowess that strengthened the hearts of his people. Nor less on the other side did the Great Khan's son and Prester John's grandson, for well they proved their valour in the medley, and did astonishing feats of arms, leading their troops with right good judgment.

And what shall I tell you? The battle lasted so long that it was one of the hardest the Tartars ever fought. Either side strove hard to bring the matter to a point and rout the enemy, but to no avail. And so the battle went on till vesper-tide, and without victory on either side. Many a man fell there; many a child was made an orphan there; many a lady widowed; and many another woman plunged in grief and tears for the rest of her days, I mean the mothers and the *araines* of those who fell.

So when they had fought till the sun was low they left off, and retired each side to its tents. Those who were unhurt were so dead tired that they were like to drop, and the wounded, who were many on both sides, were moaning in their various degrees of pain; but all were more fit for rest than fighting, so gladly they took their repose that night. And when morning approached, King Kaidu, who had news from his scouts that the Great Khan was sending a great army to reinforce his son, judged that it was time to be off; so he called his host to saddle and mounted his horse at dawn, and away they

set on their return to their own country. And when the Great Khan's son and the grandson of Prester John saw that King Kaidu had retired with all his host, they let them go unpursued, for they were themselves sorely fatigued and needed rest. So King Kaidu and his host rode and rode, till they came to their own realm of Great Turkey and to Samarkand; and there they abode a long while without again making war.

CHAPTER III

What the Great Khan said to the mischief done by Kaidu his nephew

Now the Grand Khan was greatly enraged against Kaidu, who was always doing so much injury to his people and his territory, and he said in himself, that if he had not been his nephew, he should not have escaped an evil death. But his feelings of relationship hindered him from destroying him and his land; and thus Kaidu escaped from the hands of the Grand Khan. We will now leave this matter, and we will tell you a strange history of King Kaidu's daughter.

CHAPTER IV

Of the Exploits of King Kaidu's valiant Daughter

Now you must know that King Kaidu had a daughter whose name was Ai-yaruk, which in the Tartar is as much as to say "The Bright Moon." This damsel was very beautiful, but also so strong and brave that in all her father's realm there was no man who could outdo her in feats of strength. In all trials she showed greater strength than any man of them.

Her father often desired to give her in marriage, but she would none of it. She vowed she would never marry till she found a man who could vanquish her in every

trial; him she would wed and none else. And when her father saw how resolute she was, he gave a formal consent in their fashion, that she should marry whom she list and when she list. The lady was so tall and muscular, so stout and shapely withal, that she was almost like a giantess. She had distributed her challenges over all the kingdoms, declaring that whosoever should come to try a fall with her, it should be on these conditions, *viz.*, that if she vanquished him she should win from him 100 horses, and if he vanquished her he should win her to wife. Hence many a noble youth had come to try his strength against her, but she beat them all; and in this way she had won more than 10,000 horses.

Now it came to pass in the year of Christ 1280 that there presented himself a noble young gallant, the son of a rich and puissant king, a man of prowess and valiance and great strength of body, who had heard word of the damsel's challenge, and came to match himself against her in the hope of vanquishing her and winning her to wife. That he greatly desired, for the young lady was passing fair. He, too, was young and handsome, fearless and strong in every way, insomuch that not a man in all his father's realm could vie with him. So he came full confidently, and brought with him 1000 horses to be forfeited if she should vanquish him. Thus might she gain 1000 horses at a single stroke! But the young gallant had such confidence in his own strength that he counted securely to win her.

Now ye must know that King Kaidu and the Queen his wife, the mother of the stout damsel, did privily beseech their daughter to let herself be vanquished. For they greatly desired this prince for their daughter, seeing what a noble youth he was, and the son of a great king. But the damsel answered that never would she let herself be vanquished if she could help it; if, indeed, he should get the better of her then she would gladly be his wife, according to the wager, but not otherwise.

So a day was named for a great gathering at the Palace of King Kaidu, and the King and Queen were there. And when all the company were assembled, for great numbers flocked to see the match, the damsel first came forth in a strait jerkin of samite; and then came forth the young bachelor in a jerkin of taffeta; and a winsome sight they were to see. When both had taken post in the middle of the hall they grappled each other by the arms and wrestled this way and that, but for a long time neither could get the better of the other. At last, however, it so befel that the damsel threw him right valiantly on the palace pavement. And when he found himself thus thrown, and her standing over him, great indeed was his shame and discomfiture. He gat him up straightway, and without more ado departed with all his company, and returned to his father, full of shame and vexation, that he who had never yet found a man that could stand before him should have been thus worsted by a girl! And his 1000 horses he left behind him.

As to King Kaidu and his wife they were greatly annoyed, as I can tell you; for if they had had their will this youth should have won their daughter.

And ye must know that after this her father never went on a campaign but she went with him. And gladly he took her, for not a knight in all his train played such feats of arms as she did. Sometimes she would quit her father's side, and make a dash at the host of the enemy, and seize some man thereout, as deftly as a hawk pounces on a bird, and carry him to her father; and this she did many a time.

Now I will leave this story and tell you of a great battle that Kaidu fought with Arghun the son of Abaka, Lord of the Tartars of the Levant.

CHAPTER V

How Abaka sent his Son Arghun in command against King Kaidu

Abaka the Lord of the Levant had many districts and provinces bordering on King Kaidu's territories. These lay in the direction of the *Arbre Sol*, which the Book of Alexander calls the *Arbre Sec*, about which I have told you before. And Abaka, to watch against forays by Kaidu's people, sent his son Arghun with a great force of horsemen, to keep the marches between the Arbre Sec and the River Jihun. So there tarried Arghun with all his host.

Now it came to pass that King Kaidu assembled a great army and made captain thereof a brother of his called Borrak, a brave and prudent man, and sent his host under his brother to fight with Arghun. Borrak promised to fulfil his commandment, and to do his best against Arghun and his army; and he marched with his army, which was a very numerous one, and proceeded for many days without meeting with any accident worth mentioning, till he reached the river Jihun, where he was only ten miles distant from the army of Arghun. Both sides immediately prepared for battle, and in a very fierce engagement, which took place three days afterwards, the army of Borrak was overpowered, and pursued with great slaughter over the river.

CHAPTER VI

How Arghun after the Battle heard that his Father was dead, and went to assume the Sovereignty as was his right

After Arghun had gained this battle over Kaidu's brother Borrak and his host, no long time passed before he had news that his father Abaka was dead, whereat he was sorely grieved. He made ready his army and set out

for his father's Court to assume the sovereignty as was his right; but he had a march of 40 days to reach it.

Now it befel that an uncle of Arghun's whose name was Ahmad Sultan (for he had become a Saracen), when he heard of the death of his brother Abaka, whilst his nephew Arghun was so far away, thought there was a good chance for him to seize the government. So he raised a great force and went straight to the Court of his late brother Abaka, and seized the sovereignty and proclaimed himself King; and also got possession of the treasure, which was of vast amount. All this, like a crafty knave, he divided among the Barons and the troops to secure their hearts and favour to his cause. These Barons and soldiers accordingly, when they saw what large spoil they had got from him, were all ready to say he was the best of kings, and were full of love for him, and declared they would have no lord but him. But he did one evil thing that was greatly reprobated by all; for he took all the wives of his brother Abaka, and kept them for himself.

Soon after he had seized the government, word came to him how Arghun his nephew was advancing with all his host. Then he tarried not, but straightway summoned his Barons and all his people, and in a week had fitted out a great army of horse to go to meet Arghun. And he went forth light of heart, as being confident of victory, showing no dismay, and saying on all occasions that he desired nought so much as to take Arghun, and put him to a cruel death.

CHAPTER VII

How Ahmad Sultan set out with his Host against his Nephew who was coming to claim the Throne that belonged to him

When Ahmad Sultan had collected full sixty thousand horsemen, he set out on his way to encounter Arghun and his people, and at the end of ten days' march he halted,

having received intelligence that the enemy was only five days' march from him, and equal in number to his own army. Then Ahmad established his camp in a very great and fair plain, and announced his intention of awaiting his enemy there, as a favourable place for giving battle. As soon as he arranged his camp, he called together his people, and addressed them as follows: "Lords," said he, "you know well how I ought to be liege lord of all which my brother Abaka held, because I was the son of his father, and I assisted in the conquest of all the lands and territories we possess. It is true that Arghun was the son of my brother Abaka, and that some pretend that the succession would go of right to him; but, with all respect to those who hold this opinion, I say that they are in the wrong, for as his father held the whole of so great a lordship, it is but just that I should have it after his death, who ought rightly to have had half of it during his life, though by my generosity he was allowed to retain the whole. But since it is as I tell you, pray let us defend our right against Arghun, that the kingdom and lordship may remain to us all; for I assure you that all I desire for myself is the honour and renown, while you have the profit and the goods and lordships through all our lands and provinces. I will say no more, for I know that you are wise men and love justice, and that you will act for the honour and good of us all." When he had ended, all the barons, and knights, and others who were there, replied with one accord that they would not desert him as long as they had life in their bodies, and that they would aid him against all men whatever, and especially against Arghun, adding that they feared not but they should take him and deliver him into his hands. After this, Ahmad and his army remained in their camp, waiting the approach of the enemy.

CHAPTER VIII

How Arghun took Counsel with his Followers about attacking his Uncle Ahmad Sultan

To return to Arghun; as soon as he received certain intelligence of the movements of Ahmad, and knew that he was encamped with so large an army, he was greatly affected, but he thought it wise to show courage and ardour before his men. Having called all his barons and wise counsellors into his tent, for he was encamped also in a very fair spot, he addressed them as follows: "Fair brothers and friends," said he, "you know well how tenderly my father loved you; while alive he treated you as brothers and sons, and you know in how many battles you were with him, and how you helped him to conquer the land he possessed. You know, too, that I am the son of him who loved you so much, and I myself love you as though you were my own body. It is just and right, therefore, that you aid me against him who comes contrary to justice and right to disherit us of our land. And you know further how he is not of our law, but that he has abandoned it, and has become a Saracen and worships Mahommet, and it would ill become us to let Saracens have lordship over Tartars. Now, fair brethren and friends, all these reasons ought to give you courage and will to do your utmost to prevent such an occurrence; wherefore I implore each of you to show himself a valiant man, and to put forth all his ardour that we may conquer in the battle, and that the sovereignty may belong to you and not to Saracens. And truly every one ought to reckon on victory, since justice is on our side, and our enemies are in the wrong. I will say no more, but again to implore every one of you to do his duty."

CHAPTER IX

How the Barons of Arghun answered his Address

When the barons and knights who were present had heard Arghun's address, each resolved that he would prefer death in the battle to defeat; and while they stood silent, reflecting on his words, one of the great barons rose and spoke thus: "Fair sir Arghun, fair sir Arghun," said he; "we know well that what you have said to us is the truth, and therefore I will be spokesman for all your men who are with you to fight this battle, and tell you openly that we will not fail you as long as we have life in our bodies, and that we would rather all die than not obtain the victory. We feel confident that we shall vanquish your enemies, on account of the justice of our cause, and the wrong which they have done; and therefore I counsel that we proceed at once against them, and I pray all our companions to acquit themselves in such a manner in this battle, that all the world shall talk of them." When this man had ended, all the others declared that they were of his opinion, and the whole army clamoured to be led against the enemy without delay. Accordingly, early next morning, Arghun and his people began their march with very resolute hearts, and when they reached the extensive plain in which Ahmad was encamped, they established their camp in good order at a distance of about ten miles from him. As soon as he had encamped, Arghun sent two trusty messengers on a mission to his uncle.

CHAPTER X

The Message sent by Arghun to Ahmad

When these two trusty messengers, who were men of very advanced age, arrived at the enemy's camp, they dismounted at Ahmad's tent, where he was attended by a

great company of his barons, and having entered it, they saluted him courteously. Ahmad, who knew them well, received them with the same courtesy, told them they were welcome, and made them sit down before him. After they had remained seated a short space, one of the messengers rose up on his feet and delivered his message as follows: "Fair sir Ahmad," said he, "your nephew Arghun wonders much at your conduct in taking from him his sovereignty, and now again in coming to engage him in mortal combat; truly this is not well, nor have you acted as a good uncle ought to act towards his nephew. Wherefore he informs you by us that he prays you gently, as that good uncle and father, that you restore him his right, so that there be no battle between you, and he will show you all honour, and you shall be lord of all his land under him. This is the message which your nephew sends you by us."

CHAPTER XI

How Ahmad replied to Arghun's Message

And when Ahmad Sultan had heard the message of Arghun his nephew, he thus replied: "Sirs and envoys," quoth he, "my nephew's words are vain; for the land is mine, not his, and I helped to conquer it as much as his father did. So go and tell my nephew that if he will I will make him a great Prince, and give him ample lands, and he shall be as my son, and the greatest lord in the land after myself. But if he will not, let him be assured that I will do my best to bring him to his death! That is my answer to my nephew, and nought else of concession or covenant shall you ever have from me!" With that Ahmad ceased, and said no word more. And when the Envoys had heard the Sultan's words they asked again: "Is there no hope that we shall find you in different mind?" "Never," quoth he, "never whilst I live shall ye find my mind changed."

The messengers immediately departed, and riding as fast as they could to Arghun's camp, dismounted at his tent and told him all that had passed. When Arghun heard his uncle's message, he was so enraged that he exclaimed in the hearing of all who were near him, "Since I have received such injury and insult from my uncle, I will never live or hold land if I do not take such vengeance that all the world shall talk of it!" After these words, he addressed his barons and knights: "Now we have nothing to do but to go forth as quickly as we can and put these faithless traitors to death; and it is my will that we attack them to-morrow morning, and do our utmost to destroy them." All that night they made preparations for battle; and Ahmad Sultan, who knew well by his spies what were Arghun's designs, prepared for battle also, and admonished his people to demean themselves with valour.

CHAPTER XII

Of the Battle between Arghun and Ahmad, and the Captivity of Arghun

Next morning, Arghun, having called his men to arms and drawn them up skilfully in order of battle, addressed to them an encouraging admonition, after which they advanced towards the enemy. Ahmad had done the same, and the two armies met on their way and engaged without further parley. The battle began with a shower of arrows so thick that it seemed like rain from heaven, and you might see everywhere the riders cast from the horses, and the cries and groans of those who lay on the earth mortally wounded were dreadful to hear. When they had exhausted their arrows, they took to their swords and clubs, and the battle became so fierce and the noise so great that you could hardly have heard God's thunder. The slaughter was very great on both sides; but at last, though Arghun himself displayed extraordinary valour, and set an example

to all his men, it was in vain, for fortune turned against him, and his men were compelled to fly, closely pursued by Ahmad and his men, who made great havoc of them.

And in the pursuit Arghun was taken. As soon as this happened they gave up the chase, and returned to their camp full of joy and exultation. Ahmad first caused his nephew to be shackled and well guarded, and then, being a man of great lechery, said to himself that he would go and enjoy himself among the fair women of his Court. He left a great Melic in command of his host, enjoining him to guard Arghun like his own life, and to follow to the Court by short marches, to spare the troops. And so Ahmad departed with a great following, on his way to the royal residence. Thus then Ahmad had left his host in command of that Melic whom I mentioned, whilst Arghun remained in irons, and in such bitterness of heart that he desired to die.

CHAPTER XIII

How Arghun was delivered from Prison

Now it befel that there was a great Tartar Baron, a very aged man, who took pity on Arghun, saying to himself that they were doing an evil and disloyal deed in keeping their lawful lord a prisoner, wherefore he resolved to do all in his power for his deliverance. So he tarried not, but went incontinently to certain other Barons and told them his mind, saying that it would be a good deed to deliver Arghun and make him their lord, as he was by right. And when the other Barons had heard what he had to put before them, then both because they regarded him as one of the wisest men among them, and because what he said was the truth, they all consented to his proposal and said that they would join with all their hearts. So when the Barons had assented, Buka (which was he who had set the business going), and with him

Ilchidai, Tughan, Tegana, Tagajar, Ulatai, and Samagar,—all those whom I have now named,—proceeded to the tent where Arghun lay a prisoner. When they had got thither, Buka, who was the leader in the business, spoke first, and to this effect: "Good my Lord Arghun," said he, "we are well aware that we have done ill in making you a prisoner, and we come to tell you that we desire to return to Right and Justice. We come therefore to set you free, and to make you our Liege Lord as by right you are!" Then Buka ceased and said no more.

CHAPTER XIV

How Arghun got the Sovereignty at last

When Arghun heard the words of Buka he took them in truth for an untimely jest, and replied with much bitterness of soul: "Good my Lord," quoth he, "you do ill to mock me thus! Surely it suffices that you have done me so great wrong already, and that you hold me, your lawful Lord, here a prisoner and in chains! Ye know well, as I cannot doubt, that you are doing an evil and a wicked thing, so I pray you go your way, and cease to flout me." "Good my Lord Arghun," said Buka, "be assured we are not mocking you, but are speaking in sober earnest, and we will swear it on our Law." Then all the Barons swore fealty to him as their Lord, and Arghun too swore that he would never reckon it against them that they had taken him prisoner, but would hold them as dear as his father before him had done.

And when these oaths had passed they struck off Arghun's fetters, and hailed him as their lord. Arghun then desired them to shoot a volley of arrows into the tent of the Melic who had held them prisoners, and who was in command of the army, that he might be slain. At his word they tarried not, but straightway shot a great number of arrows at the tent, and so slew the

Melic. When that was done Arghun took the supreme command and gave his orders as sovereign, and was obeyed by all. And you must know that the name of him who was slain, whom we have called the Melic, was SULTAN; and he was the greatest Lord after Ahmad himself. In this way that you have heard, Arghun recovered his authority.

CHAPTER XV

How AHMAD was taken PRISONER

AND when Arghun found that he was assured of the sovereignty, he gave orders to the army to commence its march towards the court. It happened one day that Ahmad was at court in his principal palace making great festivity, when a messenger came to him and said: "Sir, I bring you news, not such as I would, but very evil. Know that the barons have delivered Arghun and raised him to the sovereignty, and have slain Sultan, your dear friend; and I assure you that they are hastening hither to take and slay you; take counsel immediately what is best to be done." When Ahmad heard this, he was at first so overcome with astonishment and fear that he knew not what to do or say; but at last, like a brave and prudent man, he told the messenger to mention the news to no one, and hastily ordered his most trusty followers to arm and mount their horses; telling nobody whither he was going, he took the route to go to the Sultan of Babylonia, believing that there his life would be safe. At the end of six days he arrived at a pass which could not be avoided, the keeper of which knew that it was Ahmad, and perceived that he was seeking safety by flight. This man determined to take him, which he might easily do, as he was slightly attended. When Ahmad was thus arrested, he made great entreaty, and offered great treasure to be allowed to go free; but the keeper of the

pass, who was a zealous partizan of Arghun, replied that all the treasure in the world should not hinder him from doing his duty towards his rightful lord. He accordingly placed Ahmad under a strong guard, and marching with him to the court, arrived there just three days after Arghun had taken possession of it, who was greatly mortified that Ahmad had escaped.

CHAPTER XVI

How Ahmad was slain by Order of his Nephew

And so when the Officer of the Pass came before Arghun bringing Ahmad captive, he was in a great state of exultation, and welcomed his uncle with a malediction, saying that he should have his deserts. And he straightway ordered the army to be assembled before him, and without taking counsel with any one, commanded the prisoner to be put to death, and his body to be destroyed. So the officer appointed to this duty took Ahmad away and put him to death, and threw his body where it never was seen again.

CHAPTER XVII

How Arghun was recognised as Sovereign

And when Arghun had done as you have heard, and remained in possession of the Throne and of the Royal Palace, all the Barons of the different Provinces, who had been subject to his father Abaka, came and performed homage before him, and obeyed him, as was his due. And after Arghun was well established in the sovereignty he sent Ghazan, his son, with 30,000 horse to the *Arbre Sec*, I mean to the region so-called, to watch the frontier. Thus then Arghun got back the government. And you must know that Arghun began his reign in the year 1286 of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Ahmad had reigned two years, and Arghun reigned six years; and at the end of those six years he became ill and died; but some say 'twas of poison.

CHAPTER XVIII

How Kaikhatu seized the Sovereignty after Arghun's Death

And immediately on Arghun's death, an uncle of his who was own brother to Abaka his father, seized the throne, as he found it easy to do owing to Ghazan's being so far away as the *Arbre Sec*. When Ghazan heard of his father's death he was in great tribulation, and still more when he heard of Kaikhatu's seizing the throne. He could not then venture to leave the frontier for fear of his enemies, but he vowed that when time and place should suit he would go and take as great vengeance as his father had taken on Ahmad. And what shall I tell you? Kaikhatu continued to rule, and all obeyed him except such as were along with Ghazan. Kaikhatu took the wife of Arghun for his own, and was always dallying with women, for he was a great lechour. He held the throne for two years, and at the end of those two years he died; for you must know he was poisoned.

CHAPTER XIX

How Baidu seized the Sovereignty after the Death of Kaikhatu

When Kaikhatu was dead, Baidu, who was his uncle, and was a Christian, seized the throne. This was in the year 1294 of Christ's Incarnation. So Baidu held the government, and all obeyed him, except only those who were with Ghazan.

And when Ghazan heard that Kaikhatu was dead, and Baidu had seized the throne, he was in great vexation,

especially as he had not been able to take his vengeance on Kaikhatu. As for Baidu, Ghazan swore that he would take such vengeance on him that all the world should speak thereof; and he said to himself that he would tarry no longer, but would go at once against Baidu and make an end of him. So he addressed all his people, and then set out to get possession of his throne.

And when Baidu had intelligence thereof he assembled a great army and got ready, and marched ten days to meet him, and then pitched his camp, and awaited the advance of Ghazan to attack him; meanwhile addressing many prayers and exhortations to his own people. He had not been halted two days when Ghazan with all his followers arrived. And that very day a fierce battle began. But Baidu was not fit to stand long against Ghazan, and all the less that soon after the action began many of his troops abandoned him and took sides with Ghazan. Thus Baidu was discomfited and put to death, and Ghazan remained victor and master of all. For as soon as he had won the battle and put Baidu to death, he proceeded to the capital and took possession of the government; and all the Barons performed homage and obeyed him as their liege lord. Ghazan began to reign in the year 1294 of the Incarnation of Christ.

Thus then you have had the whole history from Abaka to Ghazan, and I should tell you that Hulagu, the conqueror of Bagdad, and the brother of the Great Khan Kublai, was the progenitor of all those I have mentioned. For he was the father of Abaka, and Abaka was the father of Arghun, and Arghun was the father of Ghazan who now reigns.

Now as we have told you all about the Tartars of the Levant, we will quit them and go back and tell you more about Great Turkey—— But in good sooth we *have* told you all about Great Turkey and the history of Kaidu, and there is really no more to tell. So we will go on and tell you of the Provinces and nations in the far North.

CHAPTER XX

Concerning King Kaunchi who rules the Far North

You must know that in the far north there is a King called Kaunchi. He is a Tartar, and all his people are Tartars, and they keep up the regular Tartar religion. A very brutish one it is, but they keep it up just the same as Jengis Khan and the proper Tartars did, so I will tell you something of it.

You must know then that they make them a god of felt, and call him Natigai; and they also make him a wife; and then they say that these two divinities are the gods of the Earth who protect their cattle and their corn and all their earthly goods. They pray to these figures, and when they are eating a good dinner they rub the mouths of their gods with the meat, and do many other stupid things.

The King is subject to no one, although he is of the Imperial lineage of Jengis Khan, and a near kinsman of the Great Khan. This King has neither city nor castle; he and his people live always either in the wide plains or among great mountains and valleys. They subsist on the milk and flesh of their cattle, and have no grain. The King has a vast number of people, but he carries on no war with anybody, and his people live in great tranquillity. They have enormous numbers of cattle, camels, horses, oxen, sheep, and so forth.

You find in their country immense bears entirely white, and more than 20 palms in length. There are also large black foxes, wild asses, and abundance of sables; those creatures I mean from the skins of which they make those precious robes that cost 1000 bezants each. There are also vairs in abundance; and vast multitudes of the Pharaoh's rat, on which the people live all the summer time. Indeed they have plenty of all sorts of wild creatures, for the country they inhabit is very wild and trackless.

And you must know that this King possesses one tract of country which is quite impassable for horses, for it abounds greatly in lakes and springs, and hence there is so much ice as well as mud and mire, that horses cannot travel over it. This difficult country is 13 days in extent, and at the end of every day's journey there is a post for the lodgment of the couriers who have to cross this tract. At each of these post-houses they keep some 40 dogs of great size, in fact not much smaller than donkeys, and these dogs draw the couriers over the day's journey from post-house to post-house, and I will tell you how. You see the ice and mire are so prevalent, that over this tract, which lies for those 13 days' journey in a great valley between two mountains, no horses (as I told you) can travel, nor can any wheeled carriage either. Wherefore they make sledges, which are carriages without wheels, and made so that they can run over the ice, and also over mire and mud without sinking too deep in it. Of these sledges indeed there are many in our own country, for 'tis just such that are used in winter for carrying hay and straw when there have been heavy rains and the country is deep in mire. On such a sledge then they lay a bear-skin on which the courier sits, and the sledge is drawn by six of those big dogs that I spoke of. The dogs have no driver, but go straight for the next post-house, drawing the sledge famously over ice and mire. The keeper of the post-house however also gets on a sledge drawn by dogs, and guides the party by the best and shortest way. And when they arrive at the next station they find a new relay of dogs and sledges ready to take them on, whilst the old relay turns back; and thus they accomplish the whole journey across that region, always drawn by dogs.

The people who dwell in the valleys and mountains adjoining that tract of 13 days' journey are great huntsmen, and catch great numbers of precious little beasts which are sources of great profit to them. Such are the Sable, the Ermine, the Vair, the *Ercolin*, the Black Fox,

and many other creatures from the skins of which the most costly furs are prepared. They use traps to take them, from which they can't escape. But in that region the cold is so great that all the dwellings of the people are underground, and underground they always live.

There is no more to say on this subject, so I shall proceed to tell you of a region in that quarter, in which there is perpetual darkness.

CHAPTER XXI

Concerning the Land of Darkness

Still further north, and a long way beyond that kingdom of which I have spoken, there is a region which bears the name of Darkness, because neither sun nor moon nor stars appear, but it is always as dark as with us in the twilight. The people have no king of their own, nor are they subject to any foreigner, and live like beasts. [They are dull of understanding, like half-witted persons.]

The Tartars however sometimes visit the country, and they do it in this way. They enter the region riding mares that have foals, and these foals they leave behind. After taking all the plunder that they can get they find their way back by help of the mares, which are all eager to get back to their foals, and find the way much better than their riders could do.

Those people have vast quantities of valuable peltry; thus they have those costly Sables of which I spoke, and they have the Ermine, the Ercolin, the Vair, the Black Fox, and many other valuable furs. They are all hunters by trade, and amass amazing quantities of those furs. And the people who are on their borders, where the Light is, purchase all those furs from them; for the people of the Land of Darkness carry the furs to the Light country for sale, and the merchants who purchase these make great gain thereby, I assure you.

The people of this region are tall and shapely, but very pale and colourless. One end of the country borders upon Great Russia. And as there is no more to be said about it, I will now proceed, and first I will tell you about the Province of Russia.

CHAPTER XXII

Description of Russia and its People. Province of Lac

Russia is a very great province, lying towards the north. The people are Christians, and follow the Greek doctrine. There are several kings in the country, and they have a language of their own. They are a people of simple manners, but both men and women very handsome, being all very white and [tall, with long fair hair]. There are many strong defiles and passes in the country; and they pay tribute to nobody except to a certain Tartar king of the Ponent, whose name is Toktai; to him indeed they pay tribute, but only a trifle. It is not a land of trade, though to be sure they have many fine and valuable furs, such as Sables, in abundance, and Ermine, Vair, Ercolin, and Fox skins, the largest and finest in the world [and also much wax]. They also possess many Silver mines, from which they derive a large amount of silver.

There is nothing else worth mentioning; so let us leave Russia, and I will tell you about the Great Sea, and what provinces and nations lie round about it, all in detail; and we will begin with Constantinople.—First, however, I should tell you of a province that lies between north and north-west. You see in that region that I have been speaking of, there is a province called Lac, which is conterminous with Russia, and has a king of its own. The people are partly Christians and partly Saracens. They have abundance of furs of good quality, which merchants export to many countries. They live by trade and handicrafts.

There is nothing more worth mentioning, so I will speak of other subjects; but there is one thing more to tell you about Russia that I had forgotten. You see in Russia there is the greatest cold that is to be found anywhere, so great as to be scarcely bearable. The country is so great that it reaches even to the shores of the Ocean Sea, and 'tis in that sea that there are certain islands in which are produced numbers of gerfalcons and peregrine falcons, which are carried in many directions. From Russia also to Oroech it is not very far, and the journey could be soon made, were it not for the tremendous cold; but this renders its accomplishment almost impossible.

Now then let us speak of the Great Sea, as I was about to do. To be sure many merchants and others have been there, but still there are many again who know nothing about it, so it will be well to include it in our Book. We will do so then, and let us begin first with the Strait of Constantinople.

CHAPTER XXIII

He begins to speak of the Straits of Constantinople, but decides to leave that matter

At the straits leading into the Great Sea, on the west side, there is a hill called the Faro.——But since beginning on this matter I have changed my mind, because so many people know all about it, so we will not put it in our description, but go on to something else. And so I will tell you about the Tartars of the Ponent, and the lords who have reigned over them.

CHAPTER XXIV

Concerning the Tartars of the Ponent and their Lords

The first lord of the Tartars of the Ponent was Sain, a very great and puissant king, who conquered Russia and Comania, Alania, Lac, Menjar, Zic, Gothia, and Gazaria; all these provinces were conquered by King Sain. Before his conquest these all belonged to the Comanians, but they did not hold well together nor were they united, and thus they lost their territories and were dispersed over divers countries; and those who remained all became the servants of King Sain.

After King Sain reigned King Batu, and after Batu Barka, and after Barka Mangu Timur, and after Mangu Timur King Tudai Mangu, and then Toktai the present sovereign.

Now I have told you of the Tartar kings of the Ponent, and next I shall tell you of a great battle that was fought between Hulagu the Lord of the Levant and Barka the Lord of the Ponent.

So now we will relate out of what occasion that battle arose, and how it was fought.

CHAPTER XXV

Of the War that arose between Hulagu and Barka, and the Battles that they fought

It was in the year 1261 of Christ's incarnation that there arose a great discord between King Hulagu the Lord of the Tartars of the Levant, and Barka the King of the Tartars of the Ponent; the occasion whereof was a province that lay on the confines of both, which both claimed and each was too proud to yield it to the other.

They mutually defied each other, each declaring that

he would go and take it, and he would see who dared hinder him. When things had come to this point, each summoned his followers to his banner, and they exerted themselves to such a degree that within six months each had assembled full three hundred thousand horsemen, very well furnished with all things appertaining to war according to their usage.

And when his preparations were complete, Hulagu the Lord of the Levant set forth with all his people. They marched for many days without any adventure to speak of, and at last they reached a great plain which extends between the Iron Gates and the Sea of Sarai. In this plain he pitched his camp in beautiful order; and I can assure you there was many a rich tent and pavilion therein, so that it looked indeed like a camp of the wealthy. Hulagu said he would tarry there to see if Barka and his people would come; so there they tarried, abiding the enemy's arrival. This place where the camp was pitched was on the frontier of the two kings. Now let us speak of Barka and his people.

CHAPTER XXVI

How Barka and his Army advanced to meet Hulagu

Now when King Barka had made all his preparations, and knew that Hulagu was on his march, he also set out on his way, and in due time reached the same plain where his enemies awaited him, and encamped at about ten miles' distance from him. Barka's camp was quite as richly decked out as that of Hulagu, and his army was more numerous, for it numbered full three hundred and fifty thousand horsemen. The two armies rested two days, during which Barka called his people together, and addressed them as follows:—"Fair sirs," said he, "you know certainly that since I came into possession of the land I

have loved you like brothers and sons, and many of you have been in many great battles with me, and you have assisted me to conquer a great part of the lands we hold. You know that I share everything I have with you, and you ought in return to do your best to support my honour, which hitherto you have done. You know what a great and powerful man Hulagu is, and how in this quarrel he is in the wrong, and we are in the right, and each of you ought to feel assured that we shall conquer him in battle, especially as our number exceeds his; for we know for certain that he has only three hundred thousand horsemen, while we have three hundred and fifty thousand as good men as his and better. For all these reasons, then, you must see clearly that we shall gain the day, but since we have come so great a distance only to fight this battle, it is my will that we give battle three days hence, and we will proceed so prudently and in such good order that we cannot fail of success, and I pray you all to show yourselves on this occasion men of courage, so that all the world shall talk of your deeds. I say no more than that I expect every one of you to be well prepared for the day appointed."

CHAPTER XXVII

How Hulagu addressed his Followers

When Hulagu knew certainly that Barka was come with so great an army, he also assembled his chiefs, and addressed them as follows:—"Fair brothers, and sons, and friends," said he, "you know that all my life I have prized you and assisted you, and hitherto you have assisted me to conquer in many battles, nor ever were you in any battle where we failed to obtain the victory, and for that reason are we come here to fight this great man Barka; and I know well that he has more men than we have, but they are not so good, and I doubt not but we shall put them all to flight and discomfiture. We know by our spy that

they intend to give us battle three days hence, of which I am very glad, and I pray you all to be ready on that day, and to demean yourselves as you used to do. One thing only I wish to impress upon you, that it is better to die on the field in maintaining our honour, than to suffer discomfiture; so let each of you fight so that our honour may be safe, and our enemies discomfited and slain."

Thus each of the kings encouraged his men, and waited for the day of the battle, and all prepared for it in the best way they could.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Of the Great Battle between Hulagu and Barka

When the day fixed for the battle arrived, Hulagu rose early in the morning, and called his men to arms, and marshalled his army with the utmost skill. He divided it into thirty squadrons, each squadron consisting of ten thousand horsemen; and to each he gave a good leader and a good captain. And when all this was duly arranged, he ordered his troops to advance, which they did at a slow pace, until they came half way between the two camps, where they halted and waited for the enemy. On the other side, King Barka had drawn up his army, which was arranged in thirty-five squadrons, exactly in the same manner as that of Hulagu's, and he also ordered his men to advance, which they did within half-a-mile of the others. There they made a short halt, and then they moved forward again till they came to the distance of about two arbalest shots of each other. It was a fair plain, and wonderfully extensive, as it ought to be, when so many thousands of men were marshalled in hostile array, under the two most powerful warriors in the world, who moreover were near kinsmen, for they were both of the imperial lineage of Jengis Khan. After the two armies had re-

mained a short while in face of each other, the nacars at length sounded, upon which both armies let fly such a shower of arrows at each other that you could hardly see the sky, and many were slain, man and horse. When all their arrows were exhausted, they engaged with swords and maces, and then the battle was so fierce that the noise was louder than the thunder of heaven, and the ground was covered with corpses and reddened with blood. Both the kings distinguished themselves by their valour, and their men were not backward in imitating their example. The battle continued in this manner till dusk, when Barka began to give way, and fled, and Hulagu's men pursued furiously, cutting down and slaying without mercy. After they had pursued a short distance, Hulagu recalled them, and they returned to their tents, laid aside their arms, and dressed their wounds; and they were so weary with fighting, that they gladly sought repose. Next morning Hulagu ordered the bodies of the dead to be buried, enemies as well as friends, and the loss was so great on both sides that it would be impossible to describe it. After this was done, Hulagu returned to his country with all his men who had survived the battle.

CHAPTER XXIX

How Tudai Mangu was Lord of the Tartars of the Ponent

You must know there was a Prince of the Tartars of the Ponent called Mangu Timur, and from him the sovereignty passed to a young gentleman called Tulabugha. But Tudai Mangu, who was a man of great influence, with the help of another Tartar King called Noghai, slew Tulabugha and got possession of the sovereignty. He reigned not long however, and at his death Toktai, an able and valiant man, was chosen sovereign in the place of Tudai Mangu. But in the meantime two

sons of that Tulabugha who was slain were grown up, and were likely youths, able and prudent.

So these two brothers, the sons of Tudai Mangu, got together a goodly company and proceeded to the court of Toktai. When they had got thither they conducted themselves with great discretion, keeping on their knees till Toktai bade them welcome, and to stand up. Then the eldest addressed the Sovereign thus: "Good my Lord Toktai, I will tell you to the best of my ability why we be come hither. We are the sons of Tudai Mangu, whom Tulabugha and Noghai slew, as thou well knowest. Of Tulabugha we will say no more, since he is dead, but we demand justice against Noghai as the slayer of our Father; and we pray thee as Sovereign Lord to summon him before thee and to do us justice. For this cause are we come!"

When Toktai had heard the youth, he knew that what he said was true, and he replied, "Fair friend, I will willingly yield to your demand of justice upon Noghai, and for that purpose we will summon him to court, and do everything which justice shall require." Then Toktai sent two messengers to Noghai, and ordered him to come to court to answer to the sons of Tulabugha for the death of their father; but Noghai laughed at the message, and told the messengers he would not go. When Toktai heard Noghai's message, he was greatly enraged, and said in the hearing of all who were about him, "With the aid of God, either Noghai shall come before me to do justice to the sons of Tulabugha, or I will go against him with all my men and destroy him."

CHAPTER XXX

Of the Second Message that Toktai sent to Noghai, and his Reply

He then sent two other messengers, who rode in all haste to the court of Noghai, and on their arrival they presented themselves before him and saluted him very courteously, and Noghai told them they were welcome. Then one of the messengers said: "Fair sir, Toktai sends you word that if you do not come to his court to render justice to the sons of Tulabugha, he will come against you with all his host, and do you all the hurt he can both to your property and person; therefore resolve what course you will pursue, and return him an answer by us." When Noghai heard Toktai's message, he was very angry, and replied to the messenger as follows: "Sir messenger," said he, "now return to your lord and tell him from me, that I have small fear of his hostility; and tell him further, that if he should come against me, I will wait for him at the entrance of my territory, for I will meet him half way. This is the message you shall carry back to your lord." The messenger hastened back, and when Toktai received this answer, he immediately sent his messengers to all parts which were under his rule, and summoned his people to be ready to go with him against King Noghai, and he had soon collected a great army. When Noghai knew certainly that Toktai was preparing to come against him with so large a host, he also made great preparation, but not so great as Toktai, because, though a great and powerful king, he was not so great or powerful as the other.

CHAPTER XXXI

How Toktai marched against Noghai

When Toktai's army was ready, he commenced his march at the head of two hundred thousand horsemen, and in due time reached the fine and extensive plain of Nerghi, where he encamped to wait for his opponent. With him were the two sons of Tulabugha, who had come with a fair company of horsemen to avenge the death of their father. Noghai also was on his march, with a hundred and fifty thousand horsemen, all young and brave men, and much better soldiers than those of Toktai. He arrived in the plain where Toktai was encamped two days after him, and established his camp at a distance of ten miles from him.

CHAPTER XXXII

How Toktai and Noghai address their People, and the next day join Battle

Then King Toktai assembled his chiefs, and said to them: "Sirs, we are come here to fight King Noghai and his men, and we have great reason to do so, for you know that all this hatred and rancour has arisen from Noghai's refusal to do justice to the sons of Tulabugha; and since our cause is just, we have every reason to hope for victory. Be therefore of good hope; but at all events I know that you are all brave men, and that you will do your best to destroy our enemies." Noghai also addressed his men in the following terms: "Fair brothers and friends," said he, "you know that we have gained many great and hard fought battles, and that we have overcome better men than these. Therefore be of good cheer. We have right on our side; for you know well that Toktai was not my superior to summon me to his court to do justice to others. I

will only further urge you to demean yourselves so in this battle that we shall be talked of everywhere, and that ourselves and our heirs will be the more respected for it."

CHAPTER XXXIII

The valiant Feats and Victory of King Noghai

Next day they prepared for battle. Toktai drew up his army in twenty squadrons, each with a good leader and captain; and Noghai's army was formed in fifteen squadrons. After a long and desperate battle, in which the two kings, as well as the two sons of Tulabugha, distinguished themselves by their reckless valour, the army of Toktai was entirely defeated, and pursued from the field with great slaughter by Noghai's men, who, though less numerous, were much better soldiers than their opponents. Full sixty thousand men were slain in this battle, but King Toktai, as well as the two sons of Tulabugha, escaped.

CHAPTER XXXIV AND LAST

Conclusion

And now ye have heard all that we can tell you about the Tartars and the Saracens and their customs, and likewise about the other countries of the world as far as our researches and information extend. Only we have said nothing whatever about the Greater Sea and the provinces that lie round it, although we know it thoroughly. But it seems to me a needless and useless task to speak about places which are visited by people every day. For there are so many who sail all about that sea constantly, Venetians, and Genoese, and Pisans, and many others, that everybody knows all about it, and that is the reason that I pass it over and say nothing of it.

Of the manner in which we took our departure from the Court of the Great Khan you have heard at the beginning of the Book, in that chapter where we told you of all the vexation and trouble that Messer Maffeo and Messer Nicolo and Messer Marco had about getting the Great Khan's leave to go; and in the same chapter is related the lucky chance that led to our departure. And you may be sure that but for that lucky chance, we should never have got away in spite of all our trouble, and never have got back to our country again. But I believe it was God's pleasure that we should get back in order that people might learn about the things that the world contains. For according to what has been said in the introduction at the beginning of the Book, there never was a man, be he Christian or Saracen or Tartar or Heathen, who ever travelled over so much of the world as did that noble and illustrious citizen of the City of Venice, Messer Marco the son of Messer Nicolo Polo.

Thanks be to God! Amen! Amen!

NOTES

NOTE ON BIBLIOGRAPHY

The oldest known version of Polo's Book was published from manuscript in 1825 by the French Geographic Society. In 1865 the version which Polo revised for the French ambassador was printed, and in 1867 the oldest Italian version. The appearance of these originals of course invalidated earlier editions and translations. In 1871 was published Sir Henry Yule's edition in English from the earliest texts. This is at once the classic English translation and the best commentary on the Book in any language. A third edition of it was revised in 1903 by the late Henri Cordier, who added in 1920 a supplement called *Ser Marco Polo*. To the elaborate notes and maps of the Yule-Cordier edition the inquiring reader is referred.

The history of travel between West and East is best told in Yule's *Cathay and the Way Thither*, revised by Cordier in the same way and issued by the Hakluyt Society as volumes 33, 37, 38, and 41, Second Series, of its *Publications*. A more general history of travel and geography in the Middle Ages is contained in the excellent *Dawn of Modern Geography*, written by Professor C. R. Beazley. Professor Beazley has also edited the narratives of the two friars who went to Mongolia.

To illuminate Polo's Book the reader is referred to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, for its article on the Mongols and on Asia and on the individual countries of Asia. More elaborate studies of the geography of Asia are made by D. G. Hogarth in *The Near East* and by Archibald Little in *The Farther East*. A less pretentious study from the newer "human" point of view is made by Professor Ellsworth Huntington, himself an explorer in central Asia, in the school text called *Asia*. In these works and in Yule's *Polo* are given references to Polo's successors.

The English translations of Polo are:

1. Frampton 1579—from a Spanish translation of the Italian translation: corrupt and incorrect.

2. Purchas 1625—paraphrase of Ramusio's amplified Polo: abridged and incorrect.

3. Marsden 1818—full translation of Ramusio: a rather heavy and unreadable style, and since it was done before the original texts were edited, antiquated.

4. Murray 1844—well translated, with some collation of texts.

5. Yule 1871, in third edition Yule-Cordier 1903—the classic edition and the best English version.

PROLOGUE

Ch. I. **Sea.**—The Black Sea.

Ch. I. **Soldaia.**—The modern Sudak, in southeastern Crimea. It was the main Russian port in Polo's time.

Ch. II. **Barka Khan.**—A grandson of the conqueror Jengis Khan, and ruler of the Golden Horde (Kipchak Tartars), who were established in Russia and westwards from 1224 to 1502.

Ch. II. **Sarai.**—A newly built city up the Volga some 200 miles. It was destroyed by Timur in 1396.

Ch. II. **Bolgara.**—From the 9th century the capital of the Bulgars until their subjugation by the Tartars in 1236. Part of the Bulgars migrated to modern Bulgaria; their city is now the village of Uspenskoye or Bolgarskoye, some 800 miles up the Volga.

Ch. II. **Hulagu.**—Another grandson of Jengis Khan, and ruler of the Ilkhan or Persian kingdom under the supreme Khan, Kublai. The war between the Persian and Russian Tartars occurred in 1262.

Ch. II. **Ponent.**—Ponent, *i.e.* West (as Levant, East), that is, of the Tartars in Russia. Ukek seems to have been a Tartar town, built on the frontier toward Russia. It is now the village of Uwek, some 500 miles up the Volga.

Ch. II. **Tigris.**—The Volga, sometimes thought to reappear as the Tigris after flowing through the Caspian Sea.

Ch. II. **Desert.**—Transcaspia is still a sandy desert punctuated by oases which are the sites of cities. A railroad now runs from the Caspian to Bokhara and Samarkand.

Ch. III. **Borrak.**—The head of a third line of descent from Jengis Khan, and ruler in Turkestan or Great Turkey. The Western conquests of Jengis are thus seen as divided among the Tartars of the West in Russia; Tartars of the Levant in Persia; Jagatai kingdom in Turkestan.

Ch. III. **Envoys.**—This is probably the mission which left Persia for China in 1265.

Ch. IV. **Court.**—Peking.

Ch. VI. **language.**—They had had six years, from 1260 to their arrival in 1266, to learn the language or languages.

Ch. VIII. **Ayas.**—What Polo calls Layas, and Chaucer Leyes, is a once flourishing port in the elbow of Asia Minor, now a mere hamlet amid ruins. The return route of the Polos is not given. Probably they came back through Bokhara and Persia to Bagdad, and across by one of the many routes to the Mediterranean.

Ch. IX. **Negropont.**—The large island anciently known as Euboea, northeast of Athens. It was a Venetian station on the way to Constantinople.

Ch. XI. **Piacenza.**—Gregory X.

Ch. XII. **Babylon.**—Babylon of Egypt, the classical name for Cairo

Ch. XII. **slain.**—The Sultan advanced from Damascus north beyond Aleppo. Ayas was beyond Aleppo.

Ch. XII. **Temple.**—The Templars had large possessions in Cilician Armenia.

Ch. XIII. **Kaiminfu.**—The Persian form of Kaipingfu, the summer capital, 200 miles by air line north of Peking. It

was built in 1256 by the Mongols, and from 1264 was known as Shangtu, or Upper Court.

Ch. XIII. **three years.**—From 1271 to 1275.

Ch. XV. **characters.**—The orders of the Great Khan are said to have been published in six languages: Mongol, Uigur, Tangut (Turk and Tartar tongues), Chinese, Persian, and Arabic.

Ch. XV. **distant.**—The province was said by Ramusio, who enlarged Polo's book in the 16th century, to be Yun-nan, on the southwest frontier. The mission was probably performed between 1277 and 1280.

Ch. XVI. **affairs.**—Polo does not record all his affairs, but we learn later that aside from his journey to the southwest, before 1280, he traveled into Outer Mongolia, he was three years governor of a city in central China, and he made a voyage to India and back before his farewell journey.

Ch. XVII. **Bulughan.**—Polo calls her Bolgana.

Ch. XVII. **Levant.**—Persia.

Ch. XVII. **life.**—In 1286.

Ch. XVIII. **Emperor.**—They appear to have sailed from Chang-chau (Zaiton), opposite Formosa. This was at the beginning of 1292.

Ch. XVIII. **Java.**—Java Minor, or Sumatra.

Ch. XVIII. **eighteen months.**—Yule reckons that they arrived at Sumatra in April; sailed for India in September; spent the spring and summer of 1293 on the west coast of India; and arrived at Ormuz in the beginning of 1294, and at their destination inland in March 1294.

Ch. XVIII. **Ghazan.**—He was then on the northern frontier of Persia. Arghun died in 1291.

Ch. XVIII. **Kaikhatu.**—Brother of the late Arghun, and usurper of the throne. Ghazan ousted him in 1295. The lady died in 1296.

Ch. XVIII. **Manzi.**—Southern China, newly conquered by Kublai Khan.

Ch. XVIII. **Kaikhatu.**—At Tabriz, the capital, in northwestern Persia. Thence they crossed Armenia by the trade route over the mountains.

BOOK I

Ch. I. **the Less.**—The Lesser Armenia is the classical Cilicia, in the elbow of Asia Minor.

Ch. I. **Ayas.**—Ayas would then have been the end of the caravan route from the East through Bagdad and Aleppo.

Ch. II. **Turcomania.**—The plateau now known as Anatolia. Because of the Egyptian invasion of Syria, the Polos have had to climb the mountains north-eastward instead of taking the caravan route east.

Ch. II. **Caesarea.**—These cities would have been off the route, to the west of the road to Erzinjan.

Ch. III. **Erzinjan.**—Beyond Erzinjan the Polos would have struck the route from the Black Sea to Persia, which passed through Erzerum and Tabriz. The rest of the places in Armenia and on the Caspian they would probably not have visited.

Ch. III. **oil.**—The oil-fields of Baku, on the Caspian.

Ch. IV. **horsemen.**—The pass of Derbend, on the Caspian. The Iron Gate is really a wall from the Caspian to the Black Sea.

Ch. IV. **Comanians.**—The Comanians are thought to have been a Turkish tribe from central Asia.

Ch. IV. **Ghelan.**—The Caspian.

Ch. IV. **Euphrates.**—The Euphrates does not of course rise in the Caspian. It rises in the mountains of Armenia, which form a watershed.

Ch. V. **Mosul.**—Polo now returns to the route, which bends back southeast to the Tigris valley, which they follow past Mosul and Bagdad to the Persian Gulf. As they reach the valley, they come into Tartar territory.

Ch. V. **Christians.**—Ancient sects, the first of which spread over Asia as far east as Peking.

Ch. V. **Jatolic.**—The Arabic form of Catholic.

Ch. V. **Mosolins.**—Muslins.

Ch. VI. **Bagdad.**—Polo calls it Baudas.

Ch. VI. **cramoisy.**—Nasich and nac were gold brocades, for which ancient Babylon was famous. Cramoisy was a velvet, originally crimson, which is the same word.

Ch. VI. **since that time.**—The capture of Bagdad took place in 1258, fourteen years previously.

Ch. VII. **year of Christ.**—The date in the original French texts is 1275, which is of course wrong, since the Califate had just been extinguished by Hulagu.

Ch. XI. **Tauris.**—The modern Tabriz, in northwest Persia, the capital of the Tartars of the Levant. Polo may have followed the route he is describing via Tabriz; but his editors think that he went via Bagdad to the Gulf. If so, he is retracing now his homeward route.

Ch. XI. **Cremesor.**—The Persian *Garmsir,* meaning the Hot Country at the mouth of the Gulf.

Ch. XIV. **three kings.**—Persian villages still bear these names.

Ch. XV. end.—See note, Chapter XXII below.

Ch. XV. **tournois.**—The French pound, equivalent in silver value to the modern pound sterling. Philip III of France fixed the maximum price of horses in this century at 60 livres tournois.

Ch. XV. **silver.**—The mark (2/3 of a pound sterling) was equal in silver value to about three pounds sterling now.

Ch. XVII. **ondanique.**—So-called Indian steel, famous since classical times for use in swords.

Ch. XVII. **descent.**—In crossing the coastal range, Polo was reaching a height of 10,000 feet.

Ch. XVIII. **Kamadin.**—Part of the ruined city of Jiruft, near Karimabad.

Ch. XVIII. **Reobarles.**—A curious compound, probably the region now known as Rudbar.

Ch. XVIII. **Paradise.**—A citrus fruit.

Ch. XVIII. **colour.**—Francolin is a kind of partridge.

Ch. XVIII. **oxen.**—The humped oxen are called in Europe the zebu.

Ch. XVIII. **Nogodar.**—Probably Nigudar, though Polo has confused at least two chieftains of the name.

Ch. XVIII. **desert.**—Sandstorms followed by " dry fogs " are still reported from Kirman.

Ch. XVIII. **Jagatai.**—Jagatai, a son of Jengis Khan, had inherited the rule of Great Turkey or Turkestan, dying 1240.

Ch. XVIII. **Kashmir.**—Ariora seems meant for Agror, a region on the Indus River. Pashai-Dir is a like compound, Pashai a language term, Dir a regional. The foray seems to have taken Nigudar from Samarkand, the capital of Jagatai, south across the mountains of Afghanistan by the regions mentioned, and by the Northwest (Khaibar) Pass into India. There are many raids of the sort recorded from the year 1260 on.

Ch. XVIII. **Dalivar.**—Either Dilawar in the Punjab (northwest India), now ruined, or the important near-by city of Lahore.

Ch. XVIII. **Conosalmi.**—Not easily identified, except as being in the Rudbar plain north of Ormuz.

Ch. XIX. **Formosa.**—Probably meant for Ormuza.

Ch. XIX. **Ormuz.**—This is not the Ormuz known to the Elizabethans and to Milton (" the wealth of Ormuz and of Ind "). The city and its market were later transferred in Polo's lifetime to an island offshore, as a result of Tartar raids from the north. Both towns have now been replaced by Bandar Abbas, as they replaced Kish.

Ch. XIX. **country.**—If the Polos came down the Gulf, the account is now following their outward journey again, after the digression which has described the homeward route through Persia. If they came down through Persia, then one supposes that they turned about at Ormuz, appalled perhaps by the ships held together by cocoanut twine, and went back through Persia.

Ch. XIX. **road.**—The route up from Ormuz is slightly to the west of the down route.

Ch. XX. **desert.**—The Polos are now crossing northward the great salt desert of Persia, once the bottom of a salt sea.

Ch. XX. **stream.**—The stream was probably part of the ancient irrigation system.

Ch. XX. **Kubenan.**—About 100 miles north of Kirman.

Ch. XXI. **Tutia.**—Tutia, which gives the English word tutty, is from the Persian word for smoke. Prepared as Polo describes from zinc ore, it is used dry as an eye-powder, or mixed with tallow as an eye-salve. It is still prepared in Persia in the same way.

Ch. XXII. **Arbre Sec.**—Polo has here combined the two legends of the Tree of the Sun, which prophesied to Alexander, and the Dry Tree, grown from the staff of Adam or of Mahomet, as they were popularly combined in the Middle Ages. What he saw or heard about was a solitary tree, an Oriental plane-tree or a cypress, which had become legendary on its own account.

Ch. XXII. **towns.**—The Polos have now turned east, along the foot of the boundary mountains of northeast Persia, to the Pamirs.

Ch. XXIII. **Aram.**—*Aram* is probably intended for the Persian word for wicked, and so explaining the word *Mulehet*, or heretic. The original seat of the Mahometan sect of the Assassins was in the mountains south of the Caspian. The Crusaders brought the story back to Europe from a colony near Lebanon.

Ch. XXIII. **Assassins.**—The word is derived from hashish, the drug mentioned.

Ch. XXV. **1252.**—The siege of the Assassins lasted from 1252 to 1256.

Ch. XXVI. **Shibrgan.**—Something has been left out of the narrative. The journey from the Castle of the Assassins, or from the Arbre Sol plain, cannot be done in anything like six days, for at Shibrgan the Polos are well into Afghanistan. Moreover, Polo has not mentioned the cities of Nishapur and Meshed which he must have passed.

Ch. XXVII. **daughter.**—Roxana.

Ch. XXVII. **Dogana.**—No clue is found to the name Dogana. It seems to mean the lowland at the west foot of the Pamirs.

Ch. XXVIII. **Badakshan.**—Badakshan is a tributary mountain province on the northeast borders of Afghanistan. The Polos are now beginning the ascent of the Pamirs.

Ch. XXX. **Pashai.**—Pashai probably means the region of Kabul, the present capital of Afghanistan, deriving from a language term.

Ch. XXXI. **idolatry.**—By idolatry Polo means Buddhism, which had spread from Kashmir into central and eastern Asia.

Ch. XXXII. **river.**—The river is a tributary of the upper Oxus.

Ch. XXXII. **highest place.**—The Pamir region is called in Persian the roof of the world: the Tartar name Pamir being the accepted one since Polo. It is the knot which ties the mountain systems of Asia: the Himalaya and Kwen-

Lun, which separate southern from central Asia; their westward prolongation across northern Persia and Armenia; and the Tian Shan and its prolongation northeastward, which separate central from northern Asia. It is really two hundred miles of plateaus, two miles at the lowest above sea level.

Ch. XXXII. **sheep.**—The sheep has been named Ovis Poli, after Polo. The horns do in fact measure sixty inches.

Ch. XXXII. **Bolor.**—Bolor must mean the east end of the Pamirs.

Ch. XXXIII. **Kashgar.**—The Polos have now descended to the plateau of East or Chinese Turkestan. It is not clear why they had crossed the difficult Pamirs eastward, instead of going by the usual route from Balkh north to Samarkand, and then east. Kashgar was a chief city, on the route from China to the West.

Ch. XXXIV. **northwest.**—Really to the west, though the trade route from Kashgar westward deviated to the northwest in crossing the Tian Shan mountains. The elder Polos had reached Samarkand on their first journey from Russia, but they had then gone around the mountains northeastward instead of crossing them to Kashgar.

Ch. XXXIV. **Kaidu.**—Really the second cousin of Kublai Khan, and lord of part of Great Turkey.

Ch. XXXIV. **Jagatai.**—Really uncle of Kublai Khan. He was not a Christian.

Ch. XXXV. **Yarkand.**—The Polos are now on the long road to Peking, following the oases along the foot of the mountain wall, the Kwen-Lun, which separates Mongolia from Tibet.

Ch. XXXVI. **the like.**—Khotan is still the chief cotton-manufacturing town in Turkestan.

Ch. XXXVII. **Pem.**—Apparently Pi-mo, now buried in the sands east of Khotan.

Ch. XXXVII. **Jasper.**—Jasper and chalcedony are the famous Chinese jade, taken from rivers or mines.

Ch. XXXIX. **Desert.**—The Polos are here at the beginning of the Gobi Desert, which stretches northeast for more than 1000 miles. But instead of venturing out into it, they keep to its southern mountain wall.

Ch. XL. **another city.**—Sha-chau is on the border of China proper. Here the westward route forks, one branch going to Kashgar, the other swinging northward around the Tian Shan mountains to Samarkand. The Polos have been following the first; Polo now digresses to describe the other, which his elders had taken on their first journey.

Ch. XLII. **Chingintalas.**—This province is not easily identified. It may be east of Sha-chau.

Ch. XLII. **is made.**—Asbestos.

Ch. XLIV. **Kan-chau.**—Polo has here reached the end of the Great Wall, built several centuries B.C. It is odd that he never mentions it.

Ch. XLIV. **idols.**—Representing Buddha, entering into Nirvana or Peace.

Ch. XLIV. **recluses.**—The lamas, or Buddhist priests.

Ch. XLIV. **five days.**—The Buddhist Sabbaths.

Ch. XLV. **Etzina.**—Etzina, or I-tsi-nay, is apparently a military settlement just built by Kublai Khan. Polo is starting off, perhaps on the mission he has just spoken of, across the main width of the desert northward, to the former Tartar capital, Karakorum.

Ch. XLVI. **Karakorum.**—Karakorum decayed after the Tartar capital was moved to China. It is now the site of Erdenitso, the oldest Buddhist monastery in Mongolia.

Ch. XLVI. **Ung Khan.**—Ung Khan was the undoubted head of a Turkish tribe, the Keraits of Mongolia, who were (Nestorian) Christians. But he is probably not the original Prester John, the mythical Christian priest and king of medieval legend, first located in Asia and later in Abyssinia.

Ch. XLVII. **daughter.**—The real story is that in 1202 Jengis sought marriage between his son and the daughter of Ung Khan.

Ch. XLVIII. **Tenduc.**—This is not the Tenduc mentioned farther on, by the Great Wall; but apparently east of Karakorum, near the modern capital Urga.

Ch. XLIX. **Cane.**—A like conjuring by Nestorian priests was observed at Karakorum by William of Ruysbroek, who arrived there on a mission from the King of France in 1254.

Ch. L. **died.**—Jengis actually died 24 years after Ung Khan, in 1227; it was his grandson Mangu Khan who died in the manner stated, in 1251.

Ch. LI. **Kuyuk Khan.**—The second ruler was in fact Ogdai (d. 1241), son of Jengis. After him ruled his son Kuyuk (d. 1248). His nephew Mangu (d. 1259) was fourth. Kublai, Ogdai's nephew and brother of Mangu, was fifth (1259–1294). Batu Khan, brother of Kublai and Mangu, was ruler only of the Russian Tartars.

Ch. LI. **Altay.**—Various places in Mongolia are credited with the tombs of the Mongol Khans. Polo places them near Karakorum.

Ch. LII. **Pharaoh rats.**—Properly the jerboa of Arabia, meaning here the mangouste or ichneumon.

Ch. LIII. **vair.**—Properly the name of the fur, probably meaning here the Siberian squirrel.

Ch. LIV. **cuirbouly.**—Boiled leather; that is, leather shaped when softened by boiling.

Ch. LVI. **Bargu.**—The region about Lake Baikal in Siberia.

Ch. LVI. **Mekrit.**—Originally subject to Ung Kahn.

Ch. LVI. **ocean.**—Really Lake Baikal.

Ch. LVII. **Erguiul.**—Not now identifiable. Polo has resumed the account of his eastward route to Peking.

Ch. LVII. **Cathay.**—The medieval name, from the Tartar, for northern China.

Ch. LVII. **Si-ning-fu.**—Earlier Si-ning-chau, the nearest Chinese city to Tibet on the southwest, and the ancient capital of China.

Ch. LVII. **cattle.**—The yak.

Ch. LVII. **downwards.**—The musk-deer has only the upper two projecting teeth.

Ch. LVIII. **Egrigaia.**—The Mongol name for Ning-hia, at the junction of the Wall and the Yellow River.

Ch. LVIII. **Calachan.**—Properly Halachar, at the foot of the mountains which here swing to the northeast to shut off the Gobi Desert from China.

Ch. LVIII. **eastward.**—Polo is following the northward loop of the Yellow River. He has arrived at last in fertile country, protected by the mountains from the Gobi sands.

Ch. LIX. **Tenduc.**—Probably the modern Tou Cheng, a small town at the top of the river loop, west of the city of Kuku-Khoto (Kwei-hwa-Cheng), the center of Chinese trade with Mongolia.

Ch. LIX. **capital city.**—The earlier account of Prester John seems to put his capital across the desert near Karakorum, rather than here on the edge of China proper.

Ch. LIX. **Magog.**—Gog and Magog were interpreted in the Middle Ages as the Tartars; the Alexander legends declared that Alexander had shut out the Tartars by a wall; hence the Great Wall of China, built to shut out the Tartars, was the wall of Gog and Magog. Polo is probably ironical, since he has already described (Chapter IV) the wall across the Caucasus, ascribed to Alexander.

Ch. LIX. **Ung and Mungul.**—Ung and Mungul correspond in a general way to the Turks (the Ung tribe being Turks hired to defend the Wall) and the Mongols or Tartars.

Ch. LIX. **Cathay.**—The Polos are traveling northeast through the populous hilly country north of the Wall.

Ch. LIX. **Suen-te-chau.**—Now Suen-hwa-fu. The Polos have crossed the Wall for good, and are now bound southeast for Peking.

Ch. LIX. **Ydifu.**—Probably a copyist's error for Yuchow, a silver-mining district in Polo's time.

Ch. LXI. **Shang-tu.**—The summer capital, across the mountains in Mongolia, and some 400 miles by road north of Peking. It is the Xanadu of Coleridge,

> " In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure-dome decree."

Now in ruins.

Ch. LXI. **canes.**—Bamboo.

Ch. LXI. **Uirat.**—From the Lake Baikal region in Siberia.

Ch. LXI. **Bakshi.**—From the Sanskrit, meaning first a begging priest, then a clerk or official, then and now a bribe for an official (backsheesh).

Ch. LXI. **Sensin.**—Properly Sien-shing, or Taoist priest.

Ch. LXI. **bran.**—Properly the Tibetan food of toasted barley.

Ch. LXI. **Patarins.**—The Cathars or Albigenses, Italian heretics of Polo's time.

BOOK II

Ch. I. **Great Khan.**—Jengis Khan, grandfather of Kublai, made an empire extending from the China to the Black Sea, and including northern China, Persia, and Caspian Russia. His successors down to Kublai added the rest of China and Persia, Bagdad, and Europe as far west as Hungary and Poland.

Ch. II. **sixth.**—Really fifth.

Ch. II. **1256.**—Really 1260.

Ch. II. **throne.**—The facts are that he was born in 1216, and died in 1294.

Ch. II. **once.**—There was one other occasion, in 1261, when he had to defend his throne against a brother, Arikbuka.

Ch. II. **uncle.**—Really a distant cousin, descended from a brother of Jengis. His lands seem to have been in Manchuria.

Ch. II. **Kaidu.**—Grandson of Ogdai, Kublai's uncle and predecessor. He ruled in eastern Turkestan and the Siberian country to the north. See Book IV, Chapter I.

Ch. III. **plain.**—Near the course of the Liao River, northeast of Peking in Manchuria.

Ch. IV. **instrument.**—The balalaika.

Ch. IV. **naccara.**—A large kettledrum, from four to eight feet across.

Ch. V. **Churchin.**—Manchuria.

Ch. V. **Kaoli.**—Northern Korea.

Ch. V. **Barscol.**—Not identified, but probably on the Manchurian border.

Ch. V. **Sinchintingin.**—Doubtful, but likewise on the border of Manchuria.

Ch. V. **against the Christians.**—Tolerance of all religions was the special policy of the Tartar empire.

Ch. VI. **Cambaluc.**—Peking.

Ch. VII. **saggi.**—The saggio was a Venetian weight of about one-sixth of an ounce. The tablets were a foot long.

Ch. VIII. **Kungurat.**—Near the Great Wall.

Ch. IX. **Son.**—Temur did indeed succeed his grandfather in 1294.

Ch. X. **Cambaluc.**—Peking. Cambaluc is Khan-balig or royal palace.

Ch. X. **great palace.**—Built in 1272. The Great Palace, a city in itself, was named Taidu.

Ch. X. **palace.**—Properly tower.

Ch. XI. **Taidu.**—The site of the present "Tartar City" of Peking. The suburbs which grew around Taidu were walled in, in 1544, to form the present "Chinese City."

Ch. XI. **paces.**—Fifty feet.

Ch. XIII. **tables.**—Small tables are obviously meant, the traditional Chinese tables for two.

Ch. XIII. **neighbor.**—A central buffet, whence the flagons circulated, was a Tartar custom.

Ch. XIV. **bezants.**—A bezant was worth approximately ten shillings ($2.50).

Ch. XV. **lucky.**—The Chinese, unlike the Mongols, use white for mourning.

Ch. XVI. **Borgal.**—Names for the soft Russia-leather, the second from the city of Bolgar on the Volga. The present city of Kazan, close to ancient Bolgar, still specializes in horse-leather of the kind.

Ch. XVIII. **leopards.**—The cheetah, a cross between the leopard and the lion.

Ch. XVIII. **and white.**—Obviously tigers.

Ch. XX. **two days.**—Quite too few to travel at least 100 miles.

Ch. XX. **Katzar Modun.**—Apparently a general name, meaning woodland.

Ch. XXIII. **Saracen.**—Mahometan: actually a Persian.

Ch. XXIV. **to ten.**—That is, the usual denominations from one cent up to twenty dollars.

Ch. XXIV. **money.**—The Chinese had used paper money since at least the 9th century.

Ch. XXX. **black stones.**—The coal deposits of China are noted by all geographers.

Ch. XXXIII. **Tacuin.**—The use of this Arabic word is typical of Polo's avoidance of Chinese terms. Indeed, students of his text believe that he knew neither Chinese nor Mongol.

Ch. XXXIV. **Most high God.**—The worship of the Most High God is probably the worship of Heaven, though it may mean ancestor worship. Natigai, whose worship Polo has already observed among the Tartars (Book I, Chapter LIII), is probably a local deity to whom Polo gave the Tartar name.

Ch. XXXV. **west.**—Really southwest.

Ch. XXXV. **Pulisangin.**—The Persian name, meaning Stone Bridge, for the Hun-ho or Muddy River, which flows into the sea just below Pekin.

Ch. XXXVI. **Manzi.**—South China, as distinct from Cathay.

Ch. XXXVII. **Akbalig.**—The Tartar for White City, meaning a royal residence. Probably the city of Cheng-ting-fu, now decayed. From here Polo's road turned west, to cross a mountain range and mount to the plateau of Shan-si, the province next west to that of Peking.

Ch. XXXVII. **industry.**—The province of Shan-si is both fertile and industrial, especially because of its coal and iron.

Ch. XXXVII. **westward.**—Really south, up the river valley.

Ch. XXXVIII. **Ki-chau.**—Not now identifiable.

Ch. XXXVIII. **Golden King.**—The Manchus (Manchurians), who ruled North China before they were overthrown by Jengis Khan, called themselves the Kin or Golden Tartars. Ki-chau would be one of their imperial residences.

Ch. XXXVIII. **Prester John.**—See Book I, Chapter XLVI.

Ch. XXXVIII. **treason.**—The story is not found in the annals of the Golden Dynasty, though something like it is told of the Tartar tribes in Outer Mongolia.

Ch. XL. **Karamuren.**—The Tartar name, meaning Black River, for the Hoang-ho or Yellow River, here flowing south in its great loop.

Ch. XL. **asper.**—A Tartar silver piece, the equivalent of threepence in those times.

Ch. XL. **canes.**—Bamboo.

Ch. XL. **Ho-chung-fu.**—Now Pu-chau-fu, in the elbow of the Yellow River where it turns eastward to the sea.

Ch. XLI. **westward.**—Up the fertile valley of the Wei River, the "granary" of northern China.

Ch. XLI. **Si-nan-fu.**—The first imperial capital, and always an important city. Polo is now in Shen-si, the second province west from that of Peking.

Ch. XLI. **Mangala.**—Mangala died in 1280, a date which fixes this mission of Polo in the beginning of his stay in China (1275–1292).

Ch. XLII. **mountains.**—The Tsin-ling-shan range, running up to 12,000 feet, one of the east and west ranges which cross western China.

Ch. XLII. **Han-chung.**—Properly a district of the province of Shen-si (Si-nan-fu).

Ch. XLII. **over mountains.**—Polo has now turned south from the Wei River, and is crossing the mountains by the great military road, called the road of the scaffoldings or hanging road.

Ch. XLIII. **province.**—What Polo calls a province is the valley of the Han between two parallel mountain ranges, which he is crossing southward. Manzi is South China. The White City is Han-chung.

Ch. XLIII. **westward.**—Properly southwestward, across the Ta-pa-shan range, which is lower than its northern parallel, but cut by deep gorges.

Ch. XLIV. **Cheng-fu.**—Now the province of Sze-chwan, bordering Tibet.

Ch. XLIV. **capital city.**—It is still one of the largest and finest of Chinese cities.

Ch. XLIV. **Kiang-sui.**—One of the rivers which make up the Yang-tse, the great central river of China. The province name, Sze-chwan, means Four Rivers.

Ch. XLIV. **comercque.**—Latin *commercium.*

Ch. XLV. **five days' march.**—Westward. The province Polo speaks of is on the China side of the high mountains, and therefore not in modern Tibet.

Ch. XLV. **canes.**—Bamboo, 30 inches around and 75 feet long. Obviously an exceptional size.

Ch. XLV. **20 days.**—West across the high mountains.

Ch. XLVI. **cinnamon.**—Properly cassia.

Ch. XLVI. **Beyamini.**—The Gaur, a kind of bison.

Ch. XLVII. **west.**—By Chantu Polo means the fertile valley of the Ngan-ning. He is going southwest along the edge of the Tibetan mountain wall, whence the tributaries of the Yang-tse River derive, and has crossed a wild mountain tract on a twenty days' march.

Ch. XLVII. **Chantu.**—Now known as Ning-yuen.

Ch. XLVII. **country.**—The inhabitants of this mountain valley were largely Tibetans.

Ch. XLVII. **clove.**—The cassia-tree, of which both the bud and the bark are used medicinally.

Ch. XLVII. **Brius.**—The Kin-sha, River of the Golden Sands, the upper Yang-tse.

Ch. XLVIII. **Karajang.**—The Mongol name for Yun-nan, the southwesterly mountain province of China.

Ch. XLVIII. **son.**—Really a grandson.

Ch. XLVIII. **the west.**—Polo has followed the Ngan-ning River southward until it joins the Kin-sha in its loop. He has continued south, not west, to the capital.

Ch. XLVIII. **Yachi.**—The modern Yun-nan-fu.

Ch. XLVIII. **Rice.**—One does not expect rice in the mountains: but the river valleys are fertile, and Yun-nan-fu is in 25 degrees north latitude.

Ch. XLVIII. **shells.**—Cowries.

Ch. XLVIII. **groats.**—Say fourpence each.

Ch. XLIX. **the west.**—Polo is bound west across the mountains to Burma.

Ch. XLIX. **Karajang.**—The city of Ta-li, on its mountain lake.

Ch. XLIX. **Hukaji.**—Polo has just said that the ruler was Essen-timur, son of Hukaji, and grandson of Kublai. Essen-timur did succeed Hukaji in 1280.

Ch. XLIX. **ten paces.**—Fifty feet.

Ch. XLIX. **ten palms.**—100 inches.

Ch. XLIX. **serpents.**—The reader will recognize this serpent as the crocodile.

Ch. XLIX. **large.**—Probably should be "a large number of."

Ch. L. **Zardandan.**—The Persian for Gold-teeth, the name of the aboriginal inhabitants (Kin-chi in Chinese).

Ch. L. **Wanchen.**—In Chinese, Yung-chang, in the mountains near the upper Salwyn River of Burma.

Ch. L. **takes to bed.**—Compare Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* for this widespread primitive custom:

> . . . . . Chineses go to bed
> And lie in, in their ladies' stead.

Ch. L. **pig-shells.**—Cowries, or shells: in Italian, *porcellana*, whence porcelain.

Ch. LI. **Bengal.**—The title of the kings of Burma, Mien being the Chinese term for Burma.

Ch. LIII. **hill.**—Down the river valley to the main southward river, the Salwyn.

Ch. LIV. **city.**—Polo seems to mean Old Pagán, near the Irawadi, under the Tropic of Cancer; but he actually describes the later Pagán, 200 miles down the river from the old. His fifteen days would take him that far; but as he does not mention any of the cities by the way down the jungle-fringed river, he may not have actually gone to either place.

Ch. LIV. **conquest.**—The Chinese invasion accomplished the fall of Pagán in 1284.

Ch. LVI. **province.**—Polo has jumped to the inland of Tong-king (for which he uses the Persian name), on the ocean coast: in the bend where China turns into Indo-China. He is certainly not following an itinerary.

Ch. LVII. **Anin.**—Polo is apparently back in China again, in the upland north of Tong-king.

Ch. LVIII. **Toloman.**—By Toloman Polo seems to mean the mountaineers of Yun-nan, east of the city of Yun-nan-fu.

Ch. LIX. **East.**—East of Yun-nan. Having made a rather indistinct circuit along the frontier of Indo-China, Polo seems now to be tracing another route back through Yun-nan, the southwestern province toward Peking.

Ch. LIX. **Fungul.**—Fungul is obscure, but it seems to be Sui-fu on the upper Yang-tse, or Kin-sha. Going out, he had crossed the river in the middle of its loop; coming back, he is crossing it after it has straightened out, several hundred miles downstream in the plain.

Ch. LIX. **lions.**—Tigers, of course.

Ch. LIX. **the river.**—Not the Yang-tse, but a tributary from the north, which Polo ascends to Cheng-tu.

Ch. LX. **city.**—In the coastal plain, 100 miles south of Peking.

Ch. LXI. **Tsi-nan-fu.**—Tsi-nan-fu is the main city of Shan-tung, the peninsular province of Confucius.

Ch. LXI. **Tai-ting-fu.**—Now Yen-chau. What Polo says of it really applies to Tsi-nan-fu.

Ch. LXI. **Sangon.**—A corruption of the Chinese word for (military) governor.

Ch. LXII. **larger river.**—The rivers were, or became, part of Kublai's Grand Canal, described in Chapter LXXII.

Ch. LXIII. **south.**—Southeast, along the canal.

Ch. LXIV. **south.**—Southeast, along the canal.

Ch. LXIV. **Si-chau.**—Now Su-tsien.

Ch. LXIV. **Karamuren.**—The Hoang-ho, or Yellow, River, which Polo had first seen on the edge of the Gobi Desert. From about 1200 A.D. to 1853, it flowed east, after its upper loop into Mongolia, into the Yellow Sea. In 1853 it cut back to its ancient route to the north of the Shantung peninsula, and now flows into the Gulf near Peking.

Ch. LXIV. **Kwa-chau.**—Kwa-chau has disappeared.

Ch. LXIV. **Manzi.**—*Man-tsi*, meaning barbarian, was the name applied by the northern Chinese to the southern. Its Persian form, *Machin*, has given rise to the European name China.

Ch. LXV. **Facfur.**—Really the Arabic for "emperor," a translation of the Chinese *Tien-tsi*, "Son of Heaven." The emperor's name was Tu-Tsong.

Ch. LXV. **1268.**—Really 1273.

Ch. LXV. **Chingsiang.**—*Chingsiang* was the Mongol title for Minister of State. It was Bayan which in Chinese meant Hundred-eyes.

Ch. LXV. **Kinsay.**—The medieval name for Hang-chau. Bayan reached it in 1276.

Ch. LXV. **Queen.**—Actually the emperor had just died (1274). His second son, an infant, was emperor under the regency of his grandmother (Polo's Queen): he was taken

to Kublai's court. His elder brother had been sent away, and died later on a southern island.

Ch. LXVII. **water.**—The flooded lakes of the Kiang-su province.

Ch. LXVIII. **Tai-chau.**—East of the canal, on a river which runs to the sea, 100 miles distant.

Ch. LXVIII. **Tung-chau.**—On the shore of the wide estuary of the Yang-tse, and at the mouth of the river from Tai-chau. It is of course quite out of Polo's way.

Ch. LXVIII. **Yang-chau.**—One of the oldest and most famous cities of China. It is on the canal, just north of the crossing of the Yang-tse River.

Ch. LXVIII. **Sings.**—Provinces.

Ch. LXVIII. **govern.**—He was probably not the governor of the province, but of the city district. His rule seems to have taken place between 1282 and 1287, when he went to India.

Ch. LXIX. **Ngan-king.**—Not the famous Nan-king, which is not far from Polo's Yang-chau, and which was otherwise named in his time. Ngan-king is 200 miles up the river, to the southwest.

Ch. LXX. **Siang-yang-fu.**—In central China, commanding the approach to Manzi from the hilly inland, a better approach than through the flooded plains which Polo has just been describing.

Ch. LXX. **surrender.**—Unfortunately for Polo's story, the siege took place before the conquest of Manzi, ending in 1273, while the Polos did not reach Peking until 1275. An improved form of mangonel was in fact introduced by Westerners at the siege: but what the Polos had to do with it remains doubtful.

Ch. LXXI. **southeast.**—Really southwest. Polo has come back from his excursion into central China, and resumes his southward route to the sea.

Ch. LXXI. **Chen-chau.**—Now I-ching, whence salt is shipped.

Ch. LXXI. **Kiang.**—The Yang-tse-Kiang (Kiang meaning River), the Mississippi of China.

Ch. LXXI. **cantars.**—From 200 to 500 tons.

Ch. LXXII. **southeast.**—At the former junction of the Yang-tse and the canal and now much decayed. The canal was completed between 1289 and 1292.

Ch. LXXII. **island.**—The island came to be called the Kin Shan, or Golden Isle. The monastery, founded in the 3rd or 4th century, was destroyed during the rebellion of 1860.

Ch. LXXIII. **Chen-kiang-fu.**—A notable port, across the river from Kwa-chau.

Ch. LXXIII. **Mar Sarghis.**—The equivalent of Dominus Sergius.

Ch. LXXIV. **Alans.**—Possibly from the western Asian tribes who were driven into Europe by the Huns, and who settled north of the Caucasus.

Ch. LXXV. **Su-chau.**—A center of silk-weaving, and known for its wares as the Paris of China.

Ch. LXXV. **bridges.**—The bridges are over the numerous canals.

Ch. LXXV. **rhubarb.**—The rhubarb and ginger come from far inland.

Ch. LXXV. **Earth.**—Polo's etymologies are fantastic.

Ch. LXXV. **Hu-chau.**—Polo digresses from his route south to Kinsay. Hu-chau is off the route, to the west.

Ch. LXXVI. **Kinsay.**—Kinsay is really King-sze, "capital." Kinsay (or Quiensay) and Cambaluc (Peking) were the names which symbolized to Europe the wealth of the East. Kinsay, now Hang-chau, was the metropolis of central

China. Were Polo traveling to-day, he would turn off east to Shanghai, near the mouth of the Yang-tse, the commercial metropolis of China.

Ch. LXXVI. **Lake.**—The famous Si-hu, or West Lake. It is outside the city, but may then have been enclosed within the immense walls which Polo describes.

Ch. LXXVI. **Kan-pu.**—Now submerged by the encroaching Bay, which is barely navigable near the land.

Ch. LXXVI. **river.**—The Tsien-tang, which is not muddy like the northern rivers. At Hang-chau, in fact, Polo has left behind the flooded country (the "Holland of China") for the hills of South China.

Ch. LXXVII. This chapter is made up from Ramusio's additions to Polo's account of Kinsay.

Ch. LXXVII. **pears.**—The pears are probably the huge Chinese quinces. Yellow peaches are probably apricots.

Ch. LXXVIII. **vast sum.**—A ducat being worth ten shillings English, this total would amount to nearly three million pounds, or something like a quarter of a billion dollars in present values.

Ch. LXXVIII. **revenue.**—A revenue of 10 million pounds from one province would certainly justify the Venetians in calling the traveler Marco Millions. The Chinese records are insufficient to check these figures by: but it may at least be said for Polo that he was probably figuring in paper money, worth about half its face value.

Ch. LXXIX. **Tanpiju.**—Polo is now on his way from Kinsay to the port of Fu-chau, 300 miles south, probably on his journey to Persia with the princess. Tanpiju probably represents Shao-hsing, southeast of Hang-chau. The Italian spelling, which varies in nearly every manuscript, shows the difficulty of identifying Chinese names which Polo got, more or less correctly, through the Mongol or even the Persian or Arabic.

Ch. LXXIX. **Wu-chau.**—Now Kin-hwa, up the river from Hang-chau. It may be that Polo was ascending the river in boats, in which case Tanpiju would be Fu-yang.

Ch. LXXIX. **Kiu-chau.**—Also on the upper river.

Ch. LXXIX. **Kiang-shan.**—Near the head of navigation of the river from Hang-chau. From here it was usual to take the portage over the hills, and float south and east, down another river, to Fu-chau on the coast. But there are other routes which would explain Polo's names.

Ch. LXXIX. **Chu-chau.**—This name is not clear. There are many conjectures as to how Polo got back to the plain again.

Ch. LXXX. **Savage people.**—Obviously some of the aboriginal people, still living in the mountains behind Fu-chau.

Ch. LXXX. **Ke-ling-fu.**—The local pronunciation of Kien-ning-fu, in the Min valley northwest of Fu-chau.

Ch. LXXX. **galingale.**—An aromatic root, like ginger. It is surprising that Polo does not mention tea, which is a staple of these central provinces.

Ch. LXXX. **fowls.**—Called in China the "velvet-hair fowls," probably the silk fowls of poultry fanciers. They are regularly white, and it is suggested that Polo meant the word "black" to apply to the flesh.

Ch. LXXX. **Unken.**—This un-Chinese word seems to mean the city called Min-tsing, near the capital Fu-chau.

Ch. LXXX. **Babylonia.**—That is, Egypt.

Ch. LXXXI. **Chonka.**—The province is now Fo-kien. Whence Polo got this word one cannot say.

Ch. LXXXI. **river.**—The Min, the "Hudson River of China."

Ch. LXXXII. **southeast.**—Really southwest.

Ch. LXXXII. **Zayton.**—The Arabic form of the old name for Tsuen-chau, 100 miles from Fu-chau, on the Strait of Formosa. Or it may mean Chang-chau, on the splendid Bay of Amoy, 50 miles beyond.

Ch. LXXXII. **Tyunju.**—Not identified.

Ch. LXXXII. **one speech.**—Polo did not learn enough about Chinese even to know that there was one universal written language, in which the signs represented ideas, not sounds. Speakers of different dialects would then understand the writing, but the sounds they used to express the sign (for "man," for example) would be mutually unintelligible.

Ch. LXXXII. **Yang-chau.**—The province of Nan-king, now called Kiang-su, in which Polo ruled a district. The three are the coast provinces.

BOOK III

Ch. I. **ships.**—Chinese ships, the largest of which were called junks. They were much larger than European ships in Polo's time, and the system of compartments shows that they were better built. Polo says nothing of the shape of the junks, because they were not different then from European ships. The latter kept the high prow and stern down into the eighteenth century.

Ch. I. **mixture.**—Oakum.

Ch. II. **Chipangu.**—Chipangu or Cipangu was the accepted name for Japan throughout the European age of discoveries. It represents the Chinese Jih-pen-kwé, which becomes in Japanese Nippon or Nihon. Japan is the Malay form.

Ch. II. **gold.**—The gold mines have been pretty well worked out.

Ch. II. **plan.**—In 1281, after one failure in 1274.

Ch. II. **Vonsainchin.**—The Chinese forms are Ngo Tsahan and Fan (Wen-hu) Siang-kiun (=General).

Ch. III. **1279.**—Polo's history is fantastic. The expedition was in 1281. It sailed the 500 miles from Kinsay to Japan, took possession of some small islands in the Korea Strait, and was defeated there in a naval battle. A storm dispersed the vanquished fleet, as the Spanish Armada was later dispersed; a portion of the army was shipwrecked on the large island of Kiu-shu, the nearest to China, and was there destroyed in battle. The expedition never reached the large central island of Japan.

Ch. V. **Hai-nan.**—Generally called the Gulf of Tong-king, an arm of the sea formed by the curve inward of the China coast to Indo-China. Polo thinks it much longer than it is.

Ch. V. **Manzi.**—Actually only the peninsula below Hong-kong, and the island of Hai-nan which prolongs it.

Ch. V. **grows.**—Actually these islands are rocky islets, distinguished only by the caverns which the sea hollows out in them, and which once sheltered numerous pirates.

Ch. V. **Champa.**—The medieval Western term for the coast of Annam, the east coast of the Indo-China peninsula.

Ch. V. **Sotu.**—Military governor of Canton.

Ch. V. **1288.**—Probably in returning from the mission to India which qualified him to escort the princess to Persia.

Ch. V. **lignaloes.**—The speckled eaglewood, used for incense.

Ch. V. **Bonus.**—An attempt to represent the Persian word, *abnûs*, for ebony.

Ch. VI. **3000 miles.**—The traditional size, about double the truth.

Ch. VI. **nutmegs.**—Nutmegs and cloves are sold, not grown, in Java.

Ch. VI. **possession.**—Kublai did try it in 1293, after the Polos had gone, but his army was beaten off.

Ch. VII. **Kondor.**—Two variant names for the Pulo Condore, one large and several small islands off the river delta of Cochin-China, at the tip of the Indo-China peninsula.

Ch. VII. **Lohok.**—Originally a separate part of Lower Siam, in the Malay Peninsula. It paid tribute to China in the next century.

Ch. VII. **brazil.**—A dyewood, the search for which planted the name in South America.

Ch. VIII. **Pentam.**—Probably Bentam, a village on the island now called Singapore, at the tip of the Malay Peninsula.

Ch. VIII. **trees.**—The santal tree.

Ch. VIII. **Malayur.**—Apparently an island off the east coast of Sumatra, not now identifiable. Malayur would mean Malay-land.

Ch. IX. **Java the Less.**—Sumatra was called Java Minor because, though a larger island than Java, it was a later home of the Javi, that is, the Malays.

Ch. IX. **eight kingdoms.**—An underestimate. Eleven different nations and languages are reckoned on the island.

Ch. IX. **southward.**—Sumatra lies between 6 degrees north and 6 degrees south latitude.

Ch. IX. **Perlak.**—Polo uses the Arabic equivalent, Ferlec. He apparently places it in the northeastern part of the island, where the names of Cape Perlak and the city Perla still stand.

Ch. IX. **Pasei.**—The Portuguese Pacem, the modern Passir; near the northern point of the island, on the east coast.

Ch. IX. **fancied.**—The rhinoceros must have been a shock to the believer in the unicorn.

Ch. X. **Samatra.**—The original Samatra or Samutra (Sanskrit for "sea"). Polo is going step by step along the northeast coast, forming the kingdom known to the Dutch as Achin.

Ch. X. **weather.**—The southwest monsoon having set in, the party spends the summer in shelter on the coast, probably in the Gulf of Pasei (Passir).

Ch. X. **Maestro.**—The Great Bear.

Ch. X. **date-palms.**—They are called the gomuti-palm.

Ch. X. **Indian nuts.**—The reader will recognize the cocoa-nut.

Ch. X. **Dagroian.**—Hardly recognizable, but still on the tip: perhaps Pedir.

Ch. XI. **Lambri.**—Not identified, but probably on the tip of the island, or near the present city of Achin.

Ch. XI. **Fansur.**—Now Barus, a little south of Achin, and still the camphor port.

Ch. XI. **flour.**—The sago-tree.

Ch. XI. **Gomespola.**—A small island off the tip, so known to the European discoverers of the 16th century. Pulo is Malay for island.

Ch. XII. **Nicobar.**—Polo's spelling is Necuveran. There are a number of islands in the group.

Ch. XIV. **2400 miles.**—Actually 700 miles.

Ch. XIV. **Sendemain.**—Not recognizable.

Ch. XV. **mountain.**—Samantakuta, "Adam's Peak."

Ch. XV. **Sakya-Muni Burkhan.**—Polo's spelling is Sagamoni Borcan. Sakya-Muni is the name of the Buddha, to which Polo adds *Burkhan*, the Mongol word meaning Buddha or God. Polo's story is correct, except that the Buddha really lived in northern India.

Ch. XVI. **Maabar.**—The Arabic name for the southeast coast, the Coromandel.

Ch. XVI. **Patlam.**—Polo spells it Bettelar. It is on the west coast of Ceylon.

Ch. XVI. **October.**—Toward the end of the southwest monsoon, and sheltered from it on the east coast of Ceylon, as the spring fishing had been done under the reverse conditions.

Ch. XVII. **104.**—More likely 108, a magic number for both Brahmans and Buddhists (=12×9).

Ch. XVII. **Pacauta.**—Probably *Bagava*, a form of the Hindu word for Lord.

Ch. XVII. **Kish**, etc.—That is, the ports of Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

Ch. XVII. **silver.**—£220 or $1000.

Ch. XVII. **Govy.**—Pariahs.

Ch. XVII. **Patarins.**—The Cathars or Albigenses, that is heretics.

Ch. XVII. **rain.**—Polo has confused the two coasts. The southeast, of which he speaks, gets its rain from the northeast, or winter, monsoon, in contrast to the Malabar coast.

Ch. XVII. **married.**—Polo has not quite grasped, or interpreted, the function of the "dancing" girls.

Ch. XVIII. **accessible.**—Mailapur, a suburb of Madras.

Ch. XVIII. **Avarian.**—Properly Hawariy.

Ch. XVIII. **hair.**—The military use of the yak's tail was found throughout Asia, especially among the Tartars.

Ch. XIX. **Motupalli.**—Now a fishing village, 170 miles north of Madras, after which Polo named the kingdom called Telingana.

Ch. XIX. **diamonds.**—The famous Golconda field.

Ch. XIX. **buckrams.**—Obviously the fine cotton stuffs, muslins and chintzes, for which the region was famous from the time of the Buddha.

Ch. XX. **Lar.**—Approximately the modern kingdom of Mysore.

Ch. XX. **Brahmans.**—Polo uses a corrupt Arabic form, Abraiaman.

Ch. XX. **Sola.**—From Sola or Chola was formed the name Cholomandala, which the Dutch made into Coromandel, the present European name for the southeast coast of India.

Ch. XX. **Choiach.**—Representing *tiyach* or *tyajya*, the rejected.

Ch. XX. **Half-tierce.**—7.30, 9, and 12.

Ch. XX. **Sulphur and quicksilver.**—The father and mother of the metals, according to the alchemists.

Ch. XXI. **Kayal.**—A once famous port, known to the Greeks as a pearl market, near the tip of the Indian peninsula. It no longer exists. Having gone inland to the realm of Mysore, Polo has now returned to discuss the seacoast: Kayal he should have mentioned immediately after Ceylon.

Ch. XXI. **Tembul.**—The Persian and Sanskrit term for betel-nut, *betel* being a South Indian word.

Ch. XXII. **Quilon.**—On the west coast near the tip. (The 500 miles to the southwest must be taken from Madras, not from the place last mentioned, Kayal.) Polo's Maabar seems to be an elastic country. Quilon was the pepper market until the 16th century.

Ch. XXII. **brazil Colombin.**—To distinguish the (dye) wood from the Sumatran and Siamese varieties. Eastern brazilwood is now known by the Malay name sappan.

Ch. XXII. **coagulates.**—From the fermentation, not from the heat of the sun. The fermented liquor yields indigo as a precipitate.

Ch. XXII. **lions.**—Tigers.

Ch. XXIII. **Comorin.**—The country about Cape Comorin, the point of the peninsula. Again Polo has gone back.

Ch. XXIII. **paul-cats.**—An inexplicable name used by Mediterranean travelers for some kind of monkey. Columbus saw them in South America.

Ch. XXIV. **Ely.**—Something like halfway to Goa, on the Malabar (west) coast, and 16 miles north of Cananor. The city of Ely no longer exists; but Mount d'Ely is still so named. This peak on the coast gave Vasco da Gama his first view of the India which he sailed around Africa to find.

Ch. XXV. **west.**—Malabar was the Arabic term for the coast Polo has just traversed, from Quilon to Ely. Calicut was the main port.

Ch. XXV. **nuts of India.**—That is, spices and cocoanuts.

Ch. XXVI. **Guzerat.**—From Goa to the Gulf of Cambay, the modern Bombay at its center.

Ch. XXVI. **tamarind.**—Persian for the Indian date.

Ch. XXVI. **six paces high.**—30 feet, which is nearly twice the actual size of this species of cotton.

Ch. XXVI. **silver.**—The mark was two-thirds of the pound sterling, say $3.25.

Ch. XXVII. **Tana.**—The modern Konkan, in the south of the Bombay Presidency. The town of Thana still exists, but the later city of Bombay has taken its commercial place. Tana should be a sub-kingdom of Guzerat, which included it.

Ch. XXVII. **brown.**—Not frankincense, but either the bdellium or black dammar still grown in Konkan.

Ch. XXVIII. **Cambay.**—Where the peninsula suddenly widens westward. The city of Cambay was once one of the greatest of Indian ports, now much diminished although it is a railway terminus.

Ch. XXVIII. **tutty.**—See Book I, Chapter XXI.

Ch. XXIX. **Somnath.**—On the peninsula west of the Gulf of Cambay, the city being still a port of some size, and the site of a once important Hindu shrine.

Ch. XXX. **Kijmekran.**—Polo has made an abrupt jump beyond the Indus River, landing in the region of Mekran, the craggy coast of Baluchistan and Persia. Kij was the name of the capital (whence the compound name), inland on the river Dasht, near the Persian border of Baluchistan.

Ch. XXXI. **Island.**—No islands exist in the locality given. The story is worldwide, being told to Columbus about Martinique.

Ch. XXXII. **Socotra.**—An island off the Abyssinian coast, and 1000 miles from Mekran. It now belongs to the British Empire, since it commands the approach to Aden and the Red Sea.

Ch. XXXII. **Bagdad.**—The head of the Nestorian Church. The inhabitants had already reverted, as Polo says, to a pre-Christian voodooism. They are now Mahometans.

Ch. XXXIII. **thousand miles.**—Actually 1800 miles.

Ch. XXXIII. **4000 miles.**—Actually 2200 miles.

Ch. XXXIII. **camels.**—There are no camels, nor indeed lions or elephants, on Madagascar. The camels suggest a confusion of Madagascar and Magadoxo, on the African coast 900 miles from Socotra.

Ch. XXXIII. **red sanders.**—Sandalwood.

Ch. XXXIII. **Griffin.**—Polo thinks he has explained away the griffin by making him out a Roc. This impressive bird of the Arabian Nights may have been imagined from an immense vulture, actually found in fossil state in Australia.

Ch. XXXIII. **tusks.**—Hippopotamus teeth do actually weigh as much. They come from Zanzibar, not from Madagascar. So of course with giraffes.

Ch. XXXIV. **2000 miles.**—This is of course pure hearsay. The grain of truth in it is the fact that Zanzibar, the land of the blacks, meant to the Arabs the whole African coast from the Equator to the Tropic of Capricorn.

Ch. XXXIV. **sheep.**—The smooth-haired Ethiopian sheep.

Ch. XXXIV. **abundant.**—Zanzibar is still a main ivory market of the world.

Ch. XXXIV. **in battle.**—The African elephant was not domesticated like the Indian, except in the north.

Ch. XXXIV. **12,700.**—The number was traditional. Modern exploration has trebled it.

Ch. XXXIV. **ten.**—Polo may have derived his thirteen kingdoms from the tradition of the twelve kings of India.

Ch. XXXIV. **Motupalli.**—From the China Sea to the Coromandel coast.

Ch. XXXV. **Abash.**—The Arabic form of Abyssinia.

Ch. XXXV. **Middle India.**—Medieval Europe knew three Indies, the third being sometimes reckoned eastern Africa. Virgil thought the Nile flowed from India; and the Greek geographers connected Asia with Africa by a land belt south of the Indian Ocean.

Ch. XXXV. **marks.**—Branding was somewhat practiced by the Abyssinians, and medieval Europe thought the practice religious.

Ch. XXXV. **advanced.**—Since the ruler of Abyssinia did not cross the Red Sea to attack the Sultan of Aden, it is likely that the latter was the Sultan of Adel, a coast region of Abyssinia. Such an expedition is recorded in 1278, not 1288.

Ch. XXXV. **cocks and hens.**—The guinea fowl.

Ch. XXXVI. **port.**—In Arabia, outside the southern entrance to the Red Sea.

Ch. XXXVI. **merchants.**—The journey would be made up the Red Sea to one of several Egyptian ports, overland to the Nile, and thence by canal to Alexandria.

Ch. XXXVI. **Sultan.**—Polo gives the name Aden not only to the city but to the fertile coast province of Yemen.

Ch. XXXVI. **took it.**—In 1291.

Ch. XXXVII. **Es-Sheher.**—The modern Sheher is a small port, replacing Polo's now ruined city.

Ch. XXXVII. **white incense.**—The real or white frankincense (called in China "milk-perfume") always came from this region.

Ch. XXXVII. **sheep.**—Apparently four-horned sheep.

Ch. XXXVII. **fish.**—The practice still holds, this coast being the border of Arabia Deserta.

Ch. XXXVIII. **500.**—Really 400, from Aden 700 miles. It was once the most important Arabian port east of Aden, in a fertile plain.

Ch. XXXIX. **northwest.**—Really 500 miles to the northeast, around the corner of Arabia. The city has disappeared.

Ch. XXXIX. **Gulf.**—The Gulf of Oman, between Persia and this corner (Oman) of Arabia.

Ch. XXXIX. **castle.**—Probably the castle at Maskat or Muskat, now the capital of Oman and one of the largest towns in Arabia, a little farther up the Gulf.

Ch. XL. **ventilators.**—The funnels or wind-catchers are still used in "the hottest place in the world."

Ch. XL. **Kish.**—The island of Kish is only 150 miles up the Persian Gulf. Possibly Polo means a city, now called Shiraf, on the mainland.

BOOK IV

In this book where Yule's text condenses the original version the text of this edition substitutes the omitted passages from the Marsden translation.

Ch. I. **Great Turkey.**—Chinese Turkestan.

Ch. I. **brother.**—Kaidu was the grandson of Ogdai Khan, uncle and predecessor of Kublai. Jagatai was another uncle

of Kublai: both uncles were sons of Jengis Khan. Polo confused the two lines because Kaidu ruled the eastern portion of Turkestan, and the house of Jagatai ruled Turkestan proper.

Ch. I. **Jihun.**—The classical Oxus, modern Amu Daria. Flowing northwest from the Pamirs into the Aral Sea, it divided Chinese from Russian Turkestan, as in Polo's time it divided Great Turkey from the Mongol kingdom in Persia.

Ch. II. **chibai.**—The names are uncertain, as is the date; 1275 seems more likely from Eastern records.

Ch. II. **Karakorum.**—The first capital of the Mongol empire, south of Lake Baikal. Polo described it in Book I, Chapter XLVI.

Ch. II. **John.**—See Book I, Chapter XLVI.

Ch. II. **araines.**—Perhaps harim (harem). All this narrative is stereotyped, and repeated by Polo (or Rustician) for every battle.

Ch. II. **without victory.**—The Mongol histories read Kaidu as successful in capturing his adversary princes. Marching on Karakorum, he was attacked and defeated by Bayan, the conqueror of Manzi.

Ch. IV. **daughter.**—Kaidu had one daughter, Kutulun, who was ambitious enough to claim his succession. The story is a familiar legend, being told of the Amazons and of Brunhild in the Germanic epic.

Ch. IV. **Levant.**—That is, of Persia. Arghun was grandson of Hulagu, brother of Kublai, to whose house was accorded the Persian conquests (the Ilkhan empire).

Ch. V. **the marches.**—The heir to the throne was assigned to border duty in the Ilkhan empire.

Ch. V. **Borrak.**—Borrak was no brother of Kaidu, but the ruler of Great Turkey. He was great-grandson of Jagatai. The invasion took place in 1269.

Ch. VI. **Abaka.**—It was not until 1282 that Abaka died.

Ch. VI. **Court.**—Tabriz, in western Persia.

Ch. XI. **valor.**—The battle was fought in 1284, near Tabriz.

Ch. XIII. **Buka.**—Probably the envoy who came to Kublai's court in 1291 to get the princess. Polo would have got the story of this war from him on their sea voyage.

Ch. XIV. **Sultan.**—His name was Alinak.

Ch. XV. **Babylon.**—Egypt.

Ch. XVIII. **brother.**—Actually Arghun's brother.

Ch. XVIII. **two years.**—He was really overthrown by a revolution four years after, in 1295.

Ch. XIX. **uncle.**—His first cousin, thought a Christian because he favored the Christians.

Ch. XX. **Kaunchi.**—There were two of the name at the time, descendants of the eldest son of Jengis Khan, Juji. (Juji's line inherited the Siberian and Russian domains, as Jagatai's inherited Great Turkey, and Tuli's divided China and Persia.) The two ruled in more or less adjacent regions northeast of the Caspian.

Ch. XX. **stupid things.**—See Book I, Chapter LIII.

Ch. XX. **wild creatures.**—Polo has already spoken of some of these (Book I, Chapter LII), though he is now ranging farther north into Siberia.

Ch. XX. **Vair.**—Vair was properly the fur rather than the animal. Here it relates to the Siberian squirrel, the skins prepared by joining the black back with the white underside in a checkered pattern. Ercolin is unidentified.

Ch. XXI. **mares.**—A legend of some antiquity.

Ch. XXI. **peltry.**—The reading of this chapter is said to have moved the English Prince Rupert to take up the organizing of the Hudson Bay Company.

Ch. XXI. **Russia.**—Polo writes Rosia.

Ch. XXI. **Ponent.**—The west.

Ch. XXII. **silver.**—Actually lead mines, producing some silver for currency, near the Crimea.

Ch. XXII. **Lac.**—Apparently Wallachia, now southern Roumania.

Ch. XXII. **Oroech.**—Oroech would mean either Norway (Noroech) or Wareg (Varangians), the Nordic settlers in Baltic Russia.

Ch. XXIV. **Sain.**—Actually Batu, grandson of Jengis, called Sain Khan or Good Prince. He led the Mongol invasion of Europe in 1240, and founded the Kipchak, or West Tartar, line.

Ch. XXIV. **Gazaria.**—That is, Comania, northeast of the Black Sea; Alania, the land of the Alans from Asia, in Caucasia south of the Comanians; Wallachia, on the west coast of the Black Sea; Hungary perhaps, Menjar resembling Magyar; Zic or Circassia, in the Caucasus; Gothia, or southern Crimea, inhabited by a tribe of Goths well into modern times; Gazaria, the land of the Khazars in the Crimea.

Ch. XXIV. **then Toktai.**—Three names are left out.

Ch. XXV. **discord.**—This was the war which blocked the return journey from Russia of the elder Polos, and sent them eastward into Asia.

Ch. XXV. **Sarai.**—The Caspian, named from the Tartar capital up the Volga. For the Iron Gates at Derbend, see Book I, Chapter IV.

Ch. XXVIII. **Battle.**—This is more of Polo's fantastic and stereotyped history. Actually the cousins chased each other back and forth across the borders, each winning battles, and each finally retiring.

Ch. XXIX. **Toktai.**—This is a highly imaginative and confused version of the quarrel between Toktai, Khan of Kipchak, and the old Noghai, a commander in the Tartar invasions of Europe and an independent ruler in south Russia. Their war seems to have been fought about 1300.

Ch. XXXI. **Plain of Nerghi.**—Apparently about the river Don.

Ch. XXXIV. **Conclusion.**—This conclusion is not found in any copy except in the Crusca Italian, and, with a little modification, in another at Florence, belonging to the Pucci family. It is just possible that it was the embellishment of a transcriber or translator; but in any case it is very old, and serves as an epilogue.—Yule's Note.

BALTIC SEA
Bjarmaland
Uigurs
Samoyedes
Tungusi
Arctic Circle
Lena R.
Obi R.
Irtish R.
Yenisei R.
Lower Tunguska R.
Upper Tunguska R.
Vilui R.
Aldan R.
Amur R.
Shilka R.
Argun R.
Sungari R.
Khingan Mts.
Mongols
Jelairs
Bargu
Merkits
Uirats
Kirghiz or Kenkemjuts
Tiukem R.
Selenga R.
L. Baikal
Khalkas
Great Desert (Desert of Gobi)
Niuche Manchus
JAPAN SEA
KOREA (CHOLI)
YELLOW SEA
HONDO
CHIPANGU OR CIPANGO.
JAPAN (NIPPON)
Yezo
Shikoku
Kiushiu
Yedo (Tokio)
Kamakura
Fusiyama
Nagasaki
Liu-kiu Islands
Tropic of Cancer
PACIFIC OCEAN
MUSCOVY
Novgorod
Moscow
Nijni Novgorod
Kostroma
Volga R.
Kama R.
Perm
Viatka
Ukak or Ucaca
Bulgar, Bolar
Great Bulgaria
Ural R.
Bashkirs
KHANATE OF KAPTCHAK
Saracanes
Astrakhan
Hill of Citracan
Sarai
Tanais R.
Don R.
Dniepr R.
Dniestr R.
Kharesm, Khuwarizm (Khiva)
Aral Sea
Caspian Sea
Caucasus Mts.
Alans
Circassi
Lesghi
Derbend
Samaron
Urgenz
Great Tartary
BLACK SEA
Sevastopoli
Constantinopli
Trebizond
Cherson
Kaffa
Soldaia
Sudak
Taman
Azov
Cumani
Tchernigov
Kiev
Kaniev
Tiligul R.
Dniepr R.
Dniestr R.
Danube R.
Hungary
Bulgaria
Servia
Byzantine Empire
Carpathian Mts.
Vienna
Prague
Breslau
Frankfort
Wolodomir
Cracow
Dantzic
Konigsberg
Riga
Pskow
Smolensko
Polotsko
Dwina R.
Petchora
Kholmogory
Torzhok
Tver
Volga R.
Kostroma
Moscow
Nijni Novgorod
Viatka
Kama R.
Perm
Ural R.
Tobol R.
Irtish R.
Ishim R.
Sibir
Obi R.
Yenisei R.
Tunguska R.
Lena R.
Vilui R.
Aldan R.
Amur R.
Shilka R.
Argun R.
Sungari R.
Khingan Mts.
Mongols
Jelairs
Bargu
Merkits
Uirats
Kirghiz or Kenkemjuts
Tiukem R.
Selenga R.
L. Baikal
Khalkas
Great Desert (Desert of Gobi)
Niuche Manchus
JAPAN SEA
KOREA (CHOLI)
YELLOW SEA
HONDO
CHIPANGU OR CIPANGO.
JAPAN (NIPPON)
Yezo
Shikoku
Kiushiu
Yedo (Tokio)
Kamakura
Fusiyama
Nagasaki
Liu-kiu Islands
Tropic of Cancer
PACIFIC OCEAN
IBIR-SIBIR
ALTAI MTS.
Caracarum, Karakorum
Syra Orda
Lmil?
Kharuks
Naimans
Kerayts
Khalkas
Khingan Mts.
Great Wall of China
Shangtu
Sandu, Cianuy
Chargannor
(Taydo Khanbalig Cambalec)
Egrigaia Ning-hia
Tozun or Tokuin
Tsekiun
Tai-yuen
Tai-ming-fu
Ping-yang
Lenjin
Lin-tsing-chan
Tsi-nan-fu
Tsi-ning-chan
Yanjan Yangsi
Sujan Su-chan
Mingan
Ying-tsu
Kwei-lin-fu (Tsueu-cyu-Gin)
Cynkalan (Canton)
Si-kiang
Zaitun
Chilen-fu
Nganking
Kaindu (Yuen Ping-fu)
Yachi
Karajang
Karajang (Yyrain)
Tai-ku
Mogulang
Sulhet
Farth
Bengala
Sunarganw
Lake Zardandan
Kaindu Uman
Song-ka R.
Kiu-chang-fu
Nan-chang-fu
Pyang
Kesho (Nanoi)
Mien (Pagan)
Taungu
Pegu
Martaban
Ava
Irrawaddy R.
Salwin R.
Mekong R.
Menam R.
Meinam R.
Ayuthia
Tenasserim
Tavoy
Siam
Cambodia
Champa
Champasanf
Pulo Condore
Palawan
Brunei
Natuna
Borneo
Celebes
Moluccas
Sulu
Tawi-Tawi
Tawalisi?
Banda
Flores
Sumatra
Java
Equator
Pageh Is.
Resengo (Regung)
Sukadana
Banjermassin
Kawoh
Lampam
Chiremai
Mt. Slamat
Borobudor
Sabrankil
Fansur (Baros)
Batta
Malacca
Singapore
Bintang
Lanchau
Lanchau-fu
Koko-nor
Si-ning-fu
Quengian, Kansan (Si-ngan-fu)
Hsiang yang
Cheng-tu-fu
Su-chau-fu
Lhasa
Tibet
Kuen Lun Mts.
Great Wall of China
Pamir
Turkestan
Kuen Lun Mts.
Tian Shan Mts.
Karakodja
Succur (Su-chau)
Sachion
Loo
Kao-tai
Camexa
Kamcheu-fu
Erginul or Erginul
Turfan
Yarkand
Kashgar
Kotan
Khotan
Kiria
Kia-yu kuan
Marco Polo
Lop
Tarim R.
Kashgar R.
Yarkand R.
Khotan R.
Kiria R.
Kuchar
Chalish
Karashar (Shu-chi)
Barkul (Chen-si)
Khamil or Hami
Turfan
Almalik
Kuldja
Bishbalk (Urumtsi)
Issyk
Talas
Asoara
Middle Empire
Ferghana
Khitai
Kharuks
Naimans
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PACIFIC OCEAN
ARABIA
ARABIAN SEA, SEA OF THE INDIES OR OF OMAN (INDIAN OCEAN)
Persian Gulf
Red Sea
Mecca
Medina
Aden
Sana
Zebid
Kune
Zafa
Kuria Muria Is.
Sokutra
Kirman
Sirjan
Kerman
Persepolis
Shiraz
Ispahan
Kashan
Veramin
Damghan
Semnan
Astrabad
Meshed
Nishapur
Merv
Sarakhs
Khorassan
Balkh
Bamian
Kabul
Ghasni
Peshawar
Kandahar
Seistan
Herat
Ziarat
Zerang
Kij Mekran or Kesmacoran (Mekran)
Kughi
Bakkar
Indus R.
Sehwan
Daibul
Lahori
Multan
Sutlej R.
Punjab
Karachal or Hardwar
Tirhut
Hindustan
Rajputana
Malwa
Gujarat
Delhi
Sumbal (Sambhal)
Kanauj
Ganges R.
Benares
Gwalior
Agra
Biana
Chanderi
Cambay
Ujjain
Narbada R.
Daulatabad
Godavari R.
Bidar
Warangal
Kistna R.
Bimlipatam
Sultanate of Delhi
Sultanate of Dour Samand
Sultanate of Malabar
Konkan
Canara
Malabar (Mobar)
Mutapili
Nellore
Pulicat
Mailapur
Dwara-Samudra
Negapatam
Tinapatam (Jafna)
Madura
Coulam
Kail
Putlam
Ceylon
Colombo
Ratanpura
Kurnegalle
Pt. de Galle
Dundra Head
Adam's Peak
Maldive Islands
Laccadive Islands
Andaman Islands
Nicobar Islands
Bay of Bengal
Indian Ocean
Barbora
Zeila
Berbera
Mogadoxo
Melinde
Mombaza
Quiloa
Sofala
Monomotapa
Zanguebar
Abyssinia
Nubia
Egypt
Nile R.
Cairo
Alexandria
Rosetta
Damietta
Jerusalem
Damascus
Tripoli
Aleppo
Euphrates R.
Tigris R.
Bagdad
Bassora
Shuster
Ispahan
Kashan
Veramin
Damghan
Semnan
Astrabad
Meshed
Nishapur
Merv
Sarakhs
Khorassan
Balkh
Bamian
Kabul
Ghasni
Peshawar
Kandahar
Seistan
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Kij Mekran or Kesmacoran (Mekran)
Kughi
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Bagdad
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Shuster
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Kurnegalle
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Maldive Islands
Laccadive Islands
Andaman Islands
Nicobar Islands
Bay of Bengal
Indian Ocean

Land routes
Sea "
Route of John of Pian de Carpine, 1245-1247
" " William of Rubruck (Rubruquis), 1253-1255
" " Marco Polo, 1271-1295
John of Pian de Carpine began and ended his journey at Lyons.
All routes shown in the map are approximate.
Mediaeval names in gothic, thus: Cambalec, SEA, ZAMPA, etc.

Scale 1 : 40 000 000
200 0 200 400 600 800 Miles

Scale 1 : 30 000 000

Long. East 90° of Greenwich

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